

Radical Healing:
Restoring hope in urban youth through afterschool programming

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the alignment between Positive Youth Development (PYD) and the Radical Healing Framework (RHF), using Project Voice, an afterschool program for high school girls, as a case study. The RHF (Ginwright, 2016) is a tool used in youth programs and community organizations to address individual and collective trauma due to the systemic oppression experienced in urban, precarious (Butler, 2009) communities of color. This research evaluates the impact programming elements like action projects, healing rituals, and critical consciousness development have on the well-being of Project Voice participants and explores the potential afterschool programs have at restoring and sustaining public health. Through a multiple methods design, this research incorporated participant observation, interviews, surveys and reflective group activities to identify the presence of RHF components. This research concludes PYD's programmatic goals support the RHF, afterschool programs do foster radical healing through intentional exploration of culture, meaningful social action and ongoing reflection. However, this research further suggests a possible need for afterschool programs to expand their programmatic goals and practices to reflect healing goals. Finally, exploration of the youth worker as a conduit for radical healing and modeler of critical consciousness and community forming is needed to determine best practices of implementing the RHF in afterschool programs.

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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

The role of afterschool programs serving urban youth of low socioeconomic status (SES) has been contested for the past century (Halpern, 2003). Afterschool programming originated as a response to concerns over the moral and character development of young people in newly industrialized cities (Halpern, 2003). Over time the field of youth development has included a spectrum of organizational worldviews ranging between advocacy, service, and organizing. In afterschool, and more broadly out-of-school time (OST), youth programs, the field lacks a clear ethos uniting efforts across organizational worldviews. Be it caring adults, safety, developing 21st century skills, or civic participation, the field maintains a variety of purposes. Organizational pressures like securing funding, maintaining a niche, and executing programming constrain organizational resources, and often result in overlooking the complicated, varying developmental needs of young people, particularly in relation to their psychological and spiritual well-being.

Youth are capable, powerful, and resilient. Yet, many young people, particularly youth of color, are growing up poor¹, in low-wealth² urban communities, impacted by persistent trauma. Concentrated poverty, systemically reinforced harm (such as policies like the War on Drugs and neoliberal agendas), and the legacies and contemporary patterns of racism³ are causing physical, psychological, spiritual, and cultural harm (Prilleltensky et al., 2008; Ginwright, 2016). This is

¹ According to the National Center for Children in Poverty, in the United States 43 percent of children under 18 years live in low-income families and 21 percent of children under 18 years live in a poor family (Yang, Granja, & Koball, 2017).

² Low-wealth refers to capital wealth (wages, salary, infrastructure) not cultural wealth (social, linguistic, familial) (yosso, 2006).

³ This research adheres to Omi and Winant's articulation of race as "a concept which signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of human bodies. Although the concept of race invokes biologically based human characteristics, selection of these particular human features for purposes of racial signification is always and necessarily a social and historical process" (1994, p.55). Given this conception of race, racism is therefore "the state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death" (Wilson Gilmore, 2007, p.28).

not to pathologize urban youth, instead, it is to name the powerful impact these forces have on one's development and perception of self. Despite good intentions, many afterschool programs struggle to balance the mission of their program with the multifaceted needs of their participants (McLaughlin, 2000). This research explores the ability of urban afterschool programs to address these psycho-spiritual injuries, foster healing, and support well-being. More specifically, this research examines the compatibility of Positive Youth Development (PYD) and the Radical Healing Framework (RHF) through studying the afterschool program, Project Voice.

Project Background

Project Voice (PV) is an afterschool youth program for teenage girls living in Marina Vista and Alder Grove (MV-AG), Sacramento's oldest public housing communities. These adjacent communities create one third of the western boarder of Sacramento, isolated by crisscrossing freeways and a large municipal cemetery. PV was created in 2014 to engage youth in a federally funded redevelopment process called the Choice Neighborhood Initiative (CNI). The fourteen teenage female participants met weekly and created a community research project using photovoice; a strategy of inquiry that combines photography, storytelling and social action (Wang, 2006). The participants interviewed and photographed residents in MV-AG to expand dialogue and knowledge of community issues from a resident perspective. In the end, MV-AG did not receive CNI funding, but PV continued meeting. In 2016, PV refined their research question to focus on the vibrancy of the public housing community and explore the hopes and dreams of adults living in public housing.

The Project Voice program coordinator, Maya⁴, and I began meeting regularly in the spring of 2016, discussing the possibility of partnering for my thesis research. We were acquainted through my graduate program. I was interested in working with PV because of their ongoing photovoice work, and at the time, Maya was organizing the program goals for the fall. Between meetings I attended the UC Davis Radical Healing Symposium, which was pivotal in conceptualizing this research project. After attending the Symposium, and specifically hearing Shawn Ginwright's presentation, I was determined to explore radical healing in the afterschool program settings. Given PV's commitment to PYD principles and implementation of youth participatory action research projects, I felt studying PV would reveal PYD's compatibility with the RHF. In further discussions Maya shared she needed to conduct a program assessment of PV, and eventually we agreed to utilize my background in program evaluation⁵ to assess PV's program quality, while also exploring the ways PV reflects the RHF and fosters radical healing.

Why Radical Healing

So why focus on a nebulous outcome like health or well-being? Healing is difficult to define and therefore difficult to measure and evaluate. However, vast scholarship confirms youth experience ongoing social, physical, psychological, and interpersonal harm throughout adolescence, and young people living in communities of low SES face even greater difficulties (Felitti, et al., 1998; Garbarino, 1995; Thompson, 2014). There is substantial literature documenting the hardships associated with growing up in communities of concentrated poverty, in segregated, poorly-funded schools, under persistent surveillance (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan,

⁴ All names reflect pseudonyms to protect the identities of those involved in Project Voice.

⁵ In 2013 I was trained as a Reliable Assessor and Quality Coach through the Weikart Center. Further discussion regarding the evaluation tool is covered in the Literature Review.

1997). Afterschool and OST programs have been used for decades to combat these negative forces by developing confidence, esteem, soft skills, community, and trust (Pittman et al., 2004; VeLure Roholt & Baizerman, 2013; McLaughlin, 2000). They have the potential to be both stabilizing and transformative, yet many programs neither acknowledge nor explore the systems perpetuating these injuries. Even fewer programs explicitly focus on healing . Shawn Ginwright, creator of the Radical Healing Framework, explains that “much of the work and research related to healing and well-being generally lacks a social justice framework or action. This is largely because healing has been conceptualized as an individual practice, separate from broader social issues, context, and environment” (2016, p. 27).

Radical Healing connects youth development literature on psychological trauma, civic engagement, cultural responsiveness, and quality program elements like interaction and engagement, while exposing the limitations of youth development focused on academic achievement⁶. While youth programs centered around social justice and action are growing in popularity, healing and well-being are difficult to measure (Snyder, et al., 1991). Partially because popular evaluation tools like the Youth Program Quality Assessment or the Survey of Academic and Youth Outcomes do not include measures of well-being. Efforts focused on youth success cradle to career ignore the developmental significance of well-being. As a field, funders don’t require these outcomes and evaluators don’t capture them, so healing repeatedly goes ignored. Radical Healing represents a shift in thinking, where “youth development” often assumes long-term outcomes, radical healing and well-being can address present harm and injury young people experience. I believe afterschool and OST programs are uniquely positioned to

⁶ Afterschool programs focused on academic achievement often focus on social-emotional learning, critical thinking, and service learning. These aims have merit, but are inadequate in meeting the vast developmental needs of young people.

focus on radical healing and well-being given their agile, flexible, adaptable structures. This research explores how PYD is complementary to the RHF and how PYD-based programs can more actively pursue healing outcomes.

Thesis Overview

This thesis pairs the work of Freire (1968), Ginwright (2016), and feminist theory (Anzaldúa, 1992; Butler, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989; Hill Collins & Bilge, 2016; England, 1994) to examine Positive Youth Development and explore how healing and well-being are currently supported in afterschool programs. I review the components of the Radical Healing Framework (Ginwright, 2016) and review the afterschool program Project Voice as a case study of the framework in action. The next section is a Literature Review which situates the RHF components show up in contemporary youth development and health discourse. The Literature Review explores critical consciousness development, meaningful social action, healing rituals, reliable loving relationships and bridges these strategies of achieving radical healing to PYD. Next, the Strategies of Inquiry outlines the evaluation process of PV; why particular inquiry strategies were used, how the program was captured, and what was successful and challenging about the inquiry process. Then, the Data section reviews the findings of the PV assessment. Finally, the Discussion connects the findings to the ideas presented in the Literature Review and what can be inferred about radical healing through PV. The Discussion closes with recommendations for youth workers and program managers interested in applying the RHF in afterschool programs and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

As a youth worker, I was “raised” in the University of Minnesota’s Youth Studies program. My classes were taught through an asset-based (Benson et al., 2004; Hamilton et al., 2004), agency promoting (VeLure Roholt & Baizerman, 2013), power equalizing lens (Foucault, 1980; Prilleltenski et al., 2008). The faculty believed in and embodied humility, praxis, youth-adult partnership, and honoring the lived experience of young people to change oppressive systems. They were obsessed with thinkers like Paulo Freire (1968) and John Dewey (1916; 1938). Following graduation, I coordinated a city-wide youth commission through a municipal Park and Recreation department. I supported young people as they identified relevant local issues, practiced power mapping, and created organizing campaigns, as I myself was becoming an active union member. Concurrently, these experiences provided a deep understanding of power, systems, and organizing.

Throughout my time coordinating the youth commission I realized that I had a different pedagogy than many co-workers and supervisors. I believed in situating skill development and programs within the realities of young people’s lived experiences. My aims were beyond on time high school graduation or getting into college, and centered around navigating systems of power, advocating for self and community, and identifying one’s passions. Increasingly I felt the role of the youth worker was undervalued in my department and by the community at large, despite the transformative experiences witnessed in the young people with whom I worked. I grew tired of department heads and local politicians affirming in crowds that young people are valuable contributors to our community, but behind closed doors making the inclusion of young people in community decision-making increasingly difficult. I eventually left my job in pursuit of a

Master's Degree, hoping greater education would provide future leverage and power within youth-serving organizations.

My frustrations reflect an ongoing tension within the field, given the purpose of youth programming has wavered since inception. Afterschool programs first started in industrial U.S. cities (such as Chicago and New York) in the late 1800's in response to child labor and compulsory education laws. As juvenile courts saw increasing caseloads and adolescent developmental science emerged, there was growing concern over the physical and moral well-being of working class, immigrant children. Referred to as "boys' work", the first afterschool spaces focused on providing refuge from the streets, socializing boys, and Americanizing immigrant children (Halpern, 2003). While "boys' work" eventually shifted to youth work, the original concerns over adolescent moral and character development continued to inspire afterschool and out-of-school time (OST)⁷.

While afterschool programs no longer Americanize immigrant children, they instead respond to the enduring achievement gaps⁸ between white students and students of color. Afterschool programs often serve as an extension of school aiming to achieve academic parity (Pittman et al., 2003; Harlem Children's Zone, 2015; Greenberg, et al., 2003). Over the past twenty-five years there has been an explosion of research regarding youth development and OST program outcomes and impacts. Research suggesting the prefrontal cortex develops into one's 20's (Giedd, 2004) has added urgency within the field to reduce risky behaviors and eliminate the academic achievement gap. Approaches range from place-based models like the Harlem

⁷ Out-of-school time broadly refers to programming before or after school, weekends, holiday breaks and summer. Whereas afterschool programs are specific to afterschool hours.

⁸ The academic achievement gap refers in the differences in test scores along racial and economic lines and is a result of "separate but equal" schooling, connecting school funding to property taxes (and therefore disparate resources school to school), and summer learning loss.

Children Zone, which pairs education with wrap-around services and community centers (Harlem Children's Zone, 2015) to prioritizing social emotional learning (SEL) outcomes (Durlak et al., 2011), and urging stronger coordination between schools and afterschool programs (Greenberg et al., 2003). Furthermore, afterschool programs have the potential to increase one's engagement in learning (Pittman et al., 2004). Programs are considered successful when they function as intentional learning environments, collaborating with community organizations (McLaughlin, 2000) and incorporating effective practices like opportunities for voice, choice & contribution and personalized instruction (Hall et al., 2003). Given this strong connection to academic achievement, program outcomes are commonly defined by proficiency scores, high school completion, college acceptance rates, or employability. While the root issues perpetuating the achievement gap are seldom discussed or addressed.

While the importance of youth engagement in learning and eliminating the academic achievement gap is indisputable, framing youth development and OST programs through academic outcomes is shortsighted. The RHF adds to youth development discourse, by instead concentrating on OST programming's benefits to self and community. Its focus on culture, agency, relationships, meaning, and achievement go beyond academic measures. These components reflect and expand elements of Positive Youth Development (PYD) and blend emerging programming and engagement best practices like the Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA), trauma informed and culturally responsive care.

The RHF builds on existing youth development literature by elevating the importance psycho-spiritual health in achieving broader youth development outcomes. It recognizes that young people experience multiple social locations, family, school and community, all which

impact their development. By focusing on radical healing, the complexities of each individual's developmental needs are elevated as are the needs of the community. The RHF is as much a framework for community development as it is youth development, and provides insight for broader organizational strategies. This literature review explores how the RHF is situated in current youth development discourse, what radical healing contributes to afterschool programming and youth development, and how the RHF can be supported within current programming practices.

Radical Healing Framework

“Well-being is both a function of external opportunities such as access to jobs, good education, quality health care, and our capacity to hope for a more equitable, inclusive, and fair society. Both are intimately tied to one another, creating an inextricable fabric of possibility” (Ginwright, 2016, p. 17).

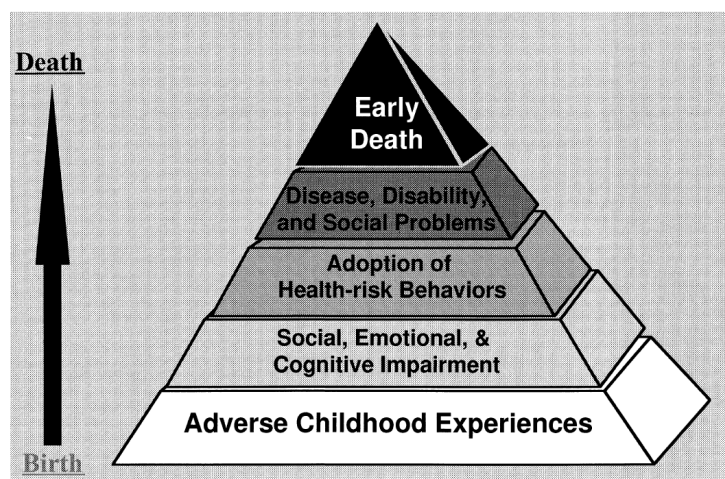
Youth programs have often been a response to national moral panics; protecting immigrants in settlement communities, preparing for world wars and civic responsibilities, responding to the violence associated with the crack epidemic, and now highlighting potential and addressing enduring academic achievement gaps. While afterschool programs take place across the country in communities of every size, programming is (and historically has been) concentrated in urban communities (Halpern, 2003). Debates regarding the effectiveness of prevention-based models, the appropriate “dosage” of programming, and ingredients of quality programming continue to exist. While the components of successful programs are contested, the desired youth outcomes are broadly agreed upon as confidence, character, connection, competence and contribution⁹ (Lerner et al. 2000; Pittman et al. 2003).

⁹ Confidence, character, connection, competence and contribution are referred to as the 5 C's. In *The Good Teen* “caring” is identified as an additional outcome. Caring is defined as having sympathy and empathy for others and committing oneself to social justice (Lerner, 2007).

The Radical Healing Framework is an approach that respects complexities of young people and responds to adverse childhood experiences (ACES) (Felitti, et al., 1998) and persistent trauma. Shawn Ginwright, a San Francisco State University professor, refers to these social toxicities (Garbarino, 1995) faced by urban youth as having “psycho-spiritual costs”. The RHF bridges several branches of PYD theory and suggests five focal areas to incorporate into programing. The framework is grounded in a transformative worldview, a belief system that is political, collaborative, and oriented towards change, power and justice (Crewsell, 2014). Many youth programs are not – in mission, vision or practice – operating through a transformative worldview, however, I argue they must. Across the United States, but specifically in urban communities, inequality is too high, racism too systemic, and politics too volatile to engage youth without striving for transformation and radical healing. Radical healing is essential to both address depression, anxiety and fatalism while achieving enduring community change (Ginwright, 2016).

James Garbarino first defined socially toxic environments in 1995, referring to the social context in which young people grow up as having potentially “poisonous” developmental consequences (p.4). Whereas ACES focuses on trauma experienced in the home, social toxicity is more broadly related to the precarious (Butler, 2009) nature of poverty and being in “survival mode”. Social toxicity calls attention to the environmental factors shaping urban youths’ development

Figure 1. Potential influences throughout the lifespan of adverse childhood experiences



(Felitti et al. 1998)

(poverty, violence, racism, divested public institutions, hyper policing and mass incarceration). For many youth, these factors shape their daily experiences in their homes, communities and schools contributing to Persistent Traumatic Stress Environment¹⁰ (Ginwright, 2016). Exposure to ACES, socially toxic environments and PTSE disproportionality effect communities of color and damages feelings of confidence, worth, hope, optimism, mental and physical health (Garbarino, 1995; Ginwright, 2016; Smith et al. 2011).

At its core, the RHF reflects a program-oriented approach to address systemic and interpersonal harm. The RHF pushes young people to understand their lived experiences, oppression and trauma, through expanding their awareness of the systems perpetuating inequality (Ginwright, 2016). Therefore, working towards radical healing involves more than survival-based measures like grit¹¹, instead it requires developing community, meaningful relationships, and a sense of self while working to change the systems creating, supporting and reinforcing inequality. In other words, “radical healing refers to a process that builds the capacity of people to act upon their environment in ways that contribute to well-being of the common good” (2016). Radical healing is about challenging systems and thriving.

Human health and development are often conceptualized through ecological models to express various factors contributing to outcomes. The RHF reflects the ecological models of both McElroy (1988) and Broffenbrenner (1979). Both models include various spheres ranging from intrapersonal factors, interpersonal processes, institutional factors, community factors, and public policy (McLeroy, et al., 1988), or more simply, self and environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

¹⁰ Unlike Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Persistent Traumatic Stress Environment refers to reoccurring traumatic events.

¹¹ Grit is a popular character trait referenced in Social Emotional Learning literature, considered a crucial attitude for young people’s future successful. Grit reflects a young person’s commitment and determination toward long-term goals (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007).

Inherently, the RHF suggests a need for healing and well-being to be conceived as a simultaneously individual and community process.

The components of the RHF were identified through conversations with and observations of teachers, youth workers and organizers in the California Bay Area. Ginwright has been exploring radical healing as a programmatic and organizational outcome for the past six years (Ginwright, 2015; Ginwright, 2010a; Ginwright, 2010b) and the framework has been put together in his most recent book *Hope and Healing in Urban Education: How Urban Activists and Teachers are Reclaiming Matters of the Heart* (Ginwright, 2016). The five framework components; Culture, Agency, Relationships, Meaning, and Achievement, referred to as CARMA (pronounced karma). CARMA includes identity exploration, action, social connectedness, understanding positionality and power. When CARMA is incorporated into programs there is potential for youth to experience individual, social, and community healing outcomes (Ginwright, 2016). So often youth development outcomes are framed through a psychological lens, reducing (or ignoring) the structural landscapes youth navigate. The RHF requires afterschool programs to consider the interrelated nature of self, community and society as inextricably linked influences and areas for developmental opportunity.

Table 1. CARMA Outcomes

Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • healing • hope and optimism • sense of purpose • sense of accomplishment
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cultural awareness • sense of belonging • collective identity • ethnic pride
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • community well-being • collective consciousness • community power • civic action • relationships and trust • social capital
(Ginwright, 2016, p. 26)	

Finally, the RHF is not a formula nor a research-validated method of youth engagement, it is instead a framework to guide programming. So for example, when my grandmother, an excellent baker, passed away, many family members were disappointed to discover her recipes were merely lists of ingredients. The RHF is like my grandmother's recipes, it is a list of ingredients meant to be used according to the knowledge and ingenuity of the baker and the climate of the kitchen. Her recipes, like the RHF, do not include quantities, directions, or timetables, they are simply a framework for doing.

Table 2. Radical Healing Framework	
CULTURE	Culture serves as an anchor to connect young people to a racial and ethnic identity that is both historical grounded and contemporarily relevant. This view of culture embraces the importance of a healthy ethnic identity for youth of color while at the same time celebrates the vibrancy and ingenuity of urban youth culture.
AGENCY	Agency is the individual and collective ability to act, create, and change external and personal issues. Agency compels youth to explore their personal power to transform problems in to possibilities.
RELATIONSHIPS	Relationships are the capacity to create, sustain, and grow healthy connections with others. Relationships build a deep sense of connection and prepares youth to know themselves as part of a long history of struggle and triumph.
MEANING	Meaning is discovering our purpose and building an awareness of our role in advancing justice. Meaning builds an awareness of the intersections of personal and political life by pushing youth to understand how personal struggles have profound political explanations.
ACHIEVEMENT	Achievement illuminates life's possibilities and acknowledges movement toward explicit goals. Achievement means to understand oppression but not be defined by it and encourages youth to explore possibilities for their lives, and work toward personal and collective advancement.
(Ginwright S. , Hope and Healing in Urban Education, 2016, pp. 25-26)	

Radical Healing Framework and Youth Development Literature

This section will review the RHF's location within youth development discourse. I will review RHF alignment with PYD and engagement strategies like civic engagement, trauma-informed and culturally responsive programming. The goal is to demonstrate how PYD programs can incorporate the RHF within existing programming, and how the RHF ties together youth engagement best practices.

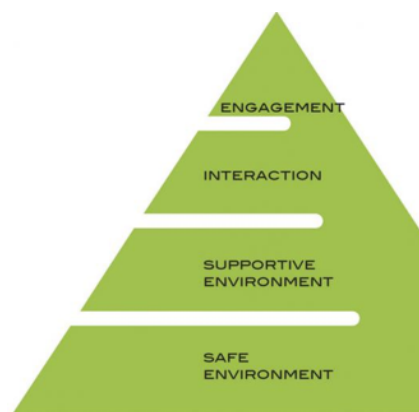
Positive Youth Development (PYD) is an asset-based youth development approach modelled after Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework of human development (1979), which understands both the environment and young people as active contributors to one's development (Dotterweich, 2015, p.11). As a philosophy of youth development, PYD responded to the perceptions of young people as violent, disrespectful and risky during the crack epidemic of the 1980s and promoted agency and youth voice (Halpern, 2003). PYD programs strive to develop the 5 C's – confidence, character, connection, competence and contribution. Under the umbrella of PYD, there are a variety of pedagogical approaches to youth development, like Civic Youth Work (CYW), Social Justice Youth Development, and Creative Youth Development, that use civic engagement or art to achieve the 5 C's.

Because the case study, Project Voice, reflects CYW pedagogy I would like to touch briefly on this approach to youth development. According to VeLure Roholt and Baizerman, “civic youth work is a way of working with young people oriented to their becoming and living as citizens who actively engage civic issues and problems meaningful and important to them (if not always consequential for them or them alone)” (2013, p. 73). Public Achievement and Youth Participatory Action Research (Y-PAR) are popular examples of CYW, combining youth

identifying and researching an issue of interest and organizing an action project to address the issue.

The purpose of afterschool programs has continually shifted, yet has consistently centered around filling developmental gaps between home and school (Pittman et al., 2003). Afterschool programs have generally provided “the *softer* outcomes: social, emotional, physical, and civic attitudes, skills, and behaviors” and have supplemented schools by supporting young people in the “transition to careers, citizenship, and family and community life” (Pittman et al. 2004, pp.20-23). The Forum for Youth Investment (The Forum) works with state and local leaders to expand learning opportunities for youth through research, advocacy and continuous improvement. The forum houses the Weikart Center, which has focused on evaluating afterschool programs utilizing the Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA) since 2005. The YPQA is growing in popularity across the U.S., and at present, has been adopted by more than 105 geographical youth work collaboratives (CYPQ, 2015). Therefore, the YPQA is heavily shaping what programs are striving to achieve. Organized around four indicators, the YPQA focuses on safe environment, supportive environment, interaction and engagement. The indicators reflect Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, and likewise reflect that baseline needs are more regularly met. Programs often excel at fostering a safe and supportive environment and struggle to score well in the interaction and engagement indicators.

Figure 2. Weikart Center’s Program Quality Pyramid

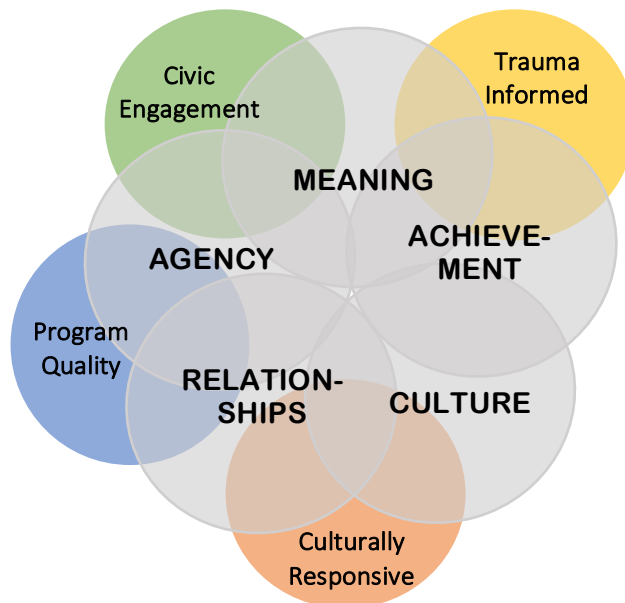


(CYPQ, 2015)

Both CYW and the interaction and engagement elements of the YPQA are reflected in CARMA components. Additionally, CARMA incorporates strategies that reflect intentional efforts to more equitably and successfully engage youth with ACES, high social toxicity and persistent trauma. Literature about trauma-informed care is rooted in juvenile justice reform, and increasingly incorporated into afterschool programs (Simpkins et al., 2017). And while the components of trauma-informed care are somewhat clinical, they boil down to safety, healthy connections, and managing emotions (Bath, 2008). In an effort to understand why afterschool programs work for some youth, but not all, Simpkins et al. (2017) used eight best practice strategies identified by the National Research Council's Committee on Community-Level Programs for Youth to identify opportunities to be more culturally responsive. This team of researchers points out "very little work on program quality has focused on the importance of culture, how youth's culture might be explicitly addressed in organized activities, and the effects of culture in activities on adolescent outcomes" (Simpkins et al., 2017). While the research on culturally responsive organized activities is limited, evidence emphasizing developmental benefits to youth of color when culture is represented and supported suggests a need for further exploration (García-Coll et al., 1996).

According to this research, the RHF overlaps with multiple established and emerging models of youth engagement (see Figure 3). The Connections between CARMA and PYD Strategies table demonstrates these intersections. For example, CYW connects to both agency and meaning. The YPQA indicators connect to agency and relationships. Trauma-informed care relates to meaning and achievement. And culturally responsive programming is associated with relationships and culture.

Figure 3. Connections between CARMA and PYD Strategies



Politics of Afterschool Programming

One of the RHF's greatest contributions to PYD is its political framing of youth development and healing. Because radical healing is beyond self-harm or interpersonal injury (ACES) and achieved in community, it inherently pushes youth programs to explore the systems perpetuating inequality, poverty, neighborhood divestment, etc. According to community psychologist Isaac Prilleltensky, "power is never political or psychological; it is always both. The same goes for wellness, liberation, and oppression; they are never political or psychological; they are always both" (Prilleltensky et al., 2008). In this way, the RHF holistically reflects developmental needs of young people.

I argue youth work is, and always has, been political. From the Settlement Houses to DARE prevention programs to today's youth leadership councils, there are clear political aims in these youth engagement efforts. Particularly when afterschool programs focus on addressing disparities – be it say academic, exposure to national parks, or employment – they have political

intentions (Freire, 1998). And development itself, particularly when working with low-wealth communities and when survival-based approaches like social emotional learning are prioritized, is political. Addressing the impacts of the poverty, high stress, and persistent trauma is political (Hanisch, 1969; Anzaldúa, 1992).

Based on methodology, again, youth development is intrinsically political. Take for example *youth voice*, a strategy of engagement, is named precisely because seeking the insights of young people does not reflect the status quo. To name youth voice as a developmental strategy indicates the political nature of asking, listening and implementing what youth voice. The RHF offers legitimacy to youthworkers advocating for a more Political approach to youth engagement. It legitimizes the importances of exploring culture and promotes exploring the root issue perpetuating personal and community challenges.

Programming to Radically Heal

In *Hope and Healing* Ginwright offers four programmatic strategies to incorporate CARMA and achieve radical healing; critical consciousness, social action, healing rituals, relational pedagogy. This section will review the ways PYD (and at times CYW) and these radical healing strategies are complimentary as well as opportunities for youth programs to better incorporate critical consciousness, social action, healing rituals, and relational pedagogy into ongoing programming.

Critical Consciousness

“Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry men pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other” (Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, 1968, p. 58).

Critical consciousness is inspired by Paulo Friere’s concept of conscientização and is defined by Ginwright in collaborative scholarship with Julio Cammarota (2002). Critical consciousness is explained “as an awareness of how institutional, historical, and systemic forces limit and promote the life opportunities for particular groups” (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002, p. 87). In the context of social theory, *critical* refers to an approach to meaning making beyond explanation in which is social critique and change is central. Therefore, critical consciousness promotes a multifaceted awareness of self, the social world, and global context (p. 89).

Table 3. Critical Consciousness; Three Levels of Awareness

Self-awareness focuses on self-evaluation and self-exploration to achieve a positive sense of self and social and cultural identity. Self-awareness promotes introspection regarding experiences of struggle and oppression as they relate to identity (race, class, gender, and sexuality).	Social awareness promotes young people’s self-awareness by cultivating “an understanding and ideology about how their immediate social world functions... [and] encourages the capacity to think critically about issues in their own communities”. Social awareness examines what contributes to and perpetuates social inequality.	Global awareness encourages young people to think beyond a national context and “become familiar with the various historical forms of oppression” as well as a “connectedness with others, empathy with suffering, and resistance to oppression”.
(Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002, pp. 88-90)		

Critical consciousness is an interdisciplinary concept. Feminist scholar, Kimberlé Crenshaw introduced the analytic tool intersectionality, which similarly expands awareness, in 1989. Intersectionality explores the experiences of “multiply burdened” people through a systems and culture lens (Crenshaw, 1989). Crenshaw’s thinking has inspired decades of scholars to engage in intersectional analysis. Recently intersectionality was described as:

... a way of understanding and analyzing the complexity in the world, in people, and in human experiences... When it comes to social inequality, people’s lives and the organization of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division, be it race or gender or class, but by many axes that work together and influence each other. Intersectionality as an

analytic tool gives people better access to the complexity of the world and of themselves.” (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2016, p. 2)

Critical consciousness invokes self, social, and global awareness, while intersectionality explores “inequality, relationality, power, social context, complexity, and social justice” (2016, p. 25). Like ecological models, both critical consciousness and intersectional thinking support analytical review of complex issues and experience.

While PYD is centered on youth voice, leadership development, and agency, developing critical consciousness (or intersectional thinking) is not intrinsic to this youth development approach. PYD instead strives for critical thinking skills, which can lack social and structural understanding. Yet CYW is oriented towards group work, assessing issues by making “connection[s] between and among social relationships, public policy, and [young people’s] everyday lived experiences”, and acting accordingly (VeLure Roholt & Baizerman, 2013, pp. 57, 83). From this perspective, critical consciousness is developed through action. However, the youth worker’s ability to model critical consciousness and promote critical, intersectional thinking in group dialogue is essential.

Social Action

“Participation and self-determination refer to the opportunity to experience meaningful decision-making power in matters affecting well-being. Both from a philosophical and psychological point of view, personal decision-making and voice and choice define our sense of agency and contribute to wellness.”
(Prilleltensky et al., 2008, p. 146)

Critical consciousness is a key programming and youth development component, however, developing a critical consciousness require “directly engaging the conditions that shape [young people’s] lives” (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002, p. 87). Critical consciousness and social action have a symbiotic relationship, both requiring and elevating the other. Social action

is an opportunity to test ideas, as the ideas are tested they can be refined, inevitably improving the strategic value of the social action. Freire refers to this practice of reflective action as praxis.

In youth development discourse words like “engagement”, “participation”, “youth voice”, and “agency” are used to refer to social action, however, these words do not necessarily predict social action. According to Freire, “the starting point for organizing the program content of education or political action must be the present, existential, concrete situation, reflecting the aspirations of the people” (Freire, 1968, p. 85). In other words, action – projects, campaigns, research – must reflect the concerns, passions, and experiences of the people. This kind of people-centered participation is a key component of Freire’s thinking, the RHF, and CYW. In all three, there is a commitment to engage in action around issues identified by the oppressed, the systematically silenced and ignored, the youth. CYW implements the critical reflection cycle – *think* (analyze, reflect), *plan* (research, strategize), *do* – to define an issue and determine how to take action.

Healing Rituals

“Increasingly, activists are seeking strategies that both address oppression (racism, sexism, homophobia, poverty) and suffering (anxiety, fear, stress, despair). These strategies are directed at fostering social change by shifting how individuals, organizations, and communities relate to one another as they envision a new way of creating collective hope”
(Ginwright S., 2016, p. 28)

Ginwright proposes several approaches to center healing in programming; transformative organizing, restorative justice, healing circles, contemplative practice, faith-based activities, cultural practices and arts activism (2016). The purpose of these healing rituals is to re-conceptualize healing as connected to “broader social issues, context, and environment” (p. 27), requiring more than individual practice. Restorative justice, healing circles and mindfulness

practices are used with growing regularity in afterschool youth programs. All are examples of trauma-informed practices which can be incorporated into any PYD program. These efforts have the potential to develop confidence, character, connection, competence and care.

Broadly speaking, “transformative organizing is to reimagine ways to restructure our economic, political, and judicial systems in ways that create justice, democracy, and equality” (Ginwright, 2016, p. 29). Transformative organizing combines critical thinking, group work and social action to promote individual and collective transformation as well as social change. Transformative organizing is an approach that equality prioritizes community building and social change.

Restorative justice is a victim-centered approach to offender accountability focused on truth-telling, empowerment and restitution. Restorative Justice dissociates punishment as accountability (Zehr, 2002). Restorative justice “is a set of principles, a philosophy, an alternate set of guiding questions, ultimately provid[ing] an alternative framework for thinking about wrongdoing” (Zehr, 2002, p. 5). PYD nor CYW inherently practice restorative justice, however, afterschool programs do, and certainly can, implement restorative justice practices in place of existing disciplinary procedures.

Healing circles provide space for youth to explore culture, relationships and meaning (as outlined in RHF’s CARMA principles). According to Ginwright, “healing circles are organized around three elements: (1) realizing the prevalence of trauma; (2) recognizing how trauma affects all individuals involved with the program, organization, or system; (3) using cultural practices that contribute to healing and well-being” (2016, p. 32). PYD does not rely on healing circles, yet these practices can be implemented. When incorporating cultural practices and the

facilitator is not a member of the cultural community, activities should be done with thoughtfulness to avoid cultural appropriation, fetishization, or outright disrespect.

Mindfulness is used within OST programs to calm, deescalate and promote self-awareness. Simply put, “mindfulness is being aware of present moment experience; physical sensations, thoughts, and emotions” (Himelstein, 2013, p. 147). When mindfulness is used in educational settings both direct and indirect approaches can be applied. Indirect approaches are when teachers incorporated mindfulness practices into the curriculum. Whereas direct approaches refer to teachers teaching students mindfulness techniques (Ginwright, 2016). Again, PYD and CYW both have the ability to structure mindfulness practices into programs, however, mindfulness is not central to either PYD or CYW.

Relational Pedagogy

“Tactful educators have developed a caring attentiveness to the unique: the uniqueness of children, the uniqueness of every situation, and the uniqueness of individual lives” (van Manen, 2002, p. 8)

Youth work is a nebulous professional field with a loosely defined code of ethics. Many positions are entry level with varying levels of training and support. Therefore, the pedagogical approach of youth work varies dramatically, and for some, is given little to no consideration. Relational pedagogy is both a philosophy and approach to working with people. Inspired by Freire (1998), relational pedagogy is the practice of engaging people with humility, courage, tolerance, and lovingness (Ginwright, 2016). This pedagogy is reflected in the work of others, referred to as *ethos of practice* (VeLure Roholt & Baizerman, 2013), *ethos of care* (Jackson et al., 2014) and *tactful teaching* (van Manen, 2002) to name a few.

As a pedagogy, relational pedagogy is an ethos of practice with “philosophical sources and philosophical stance... constituted by three sets of ideas: an anthropology of human being and of youth, a sociopolitical philosophy, and a philosophy of practice” (VeLure Roholt & Baizerman, 2013, pp. 93-94). Relational pedagogy challenges adults working with youth to be self-aware and reflective of their behaviors, assumptions and invitations. To do so ongoing critical reflection, forgiveness and restoration may be necessary (Ginwright, 2016). Adults serve a variety of roles in afterschool programs, ranging from volunteer parent, college intern, to paid employee. No matter the role, relational pedagogy requires significant reflection on the part of the adult to fully see, hear, and understand young people, to truly meet young people where they’re at, and to break the cycle of depository relationships (Freire, 1968) between youth and adults.

Both Youth-Adult Partnership (Y-AP) and trauma-informed care reflect aspects of relationship pedagogy. Many PYD programs incorporate Y-AP¹², where the adult role is more than supervision, program coordination and mentorship, adults have an opportunity to actively share power and collaborate with young people. Additionally, there is growing conversation regarding trauma-informed care and ways of implementing the principles of trauma awareness, emphasis on safety, opportunities to rebuild control, and a strengths-based approach in OST youth programming (Hopper, Bassuk, & Olivet, 2010). Despite the literature on Y-AP and trauma informed care, the pedagogical expectations for adults is undefined at many youth

¹² Youth-adult partnership is a popular engagement method used across the field of youth development. This method comprises “multiple youth and multiple adults deliberating and acting together, in a collective [democratic] fashion, over a sustained period of time, through shared work, intended to promote social justice, strengthen an organization and/or affirmatively address a community issue” (Zeldin, Christens, & Powers, 2013, p. 388)

programs. No matter one's role – be it coordinator, supervisor, volunteer, mentor, or partner – relational pedagogy ought to be central in the ways adults form connections with young people.

CHAPTER 3 – STRATEGIES OF INQUIRY

To study the experiences of Project Voice participants, their activism and hopefulness, I employed a multiple methods research approach incorporating participant-observation (Jorgensen, 2015), reflective group activities, a survey and semi-structured interviews (Longhurst, 2010). As a researcher, my goal is to create work that is useful to practitioners in the field of youth development. This research methodology is inspired by several disciplines. The design and implementation of this project mirrors the reflexive (England, 1994) and intersectional (Crenshaw, 1989) approach toward power, position and voice harnessed in the feminist tradition. My observational strategies reflect the immersion, attention to culture, and use of thick description practiced in the field of anthropology. And my style of questioning, understanding, and reviewing the system of public housing as it relates to divestment (Venkatesh, 2000), social toxicity (Garbarino, 1995), and trauma (Felitti, et al., 1998) are inspired by the field of sociology.

To examine the presence of the RHF in Project Voice and extrapolate findings to PYD, a multiple methods approach was developed to reflect both individual and collective experiences in the program. In addition to seeking evidence of the CARMA and healing rituals, I used Snyder's Hope Scale (1991) to shape questions concerning radical healing. Hope is considered reflective of well-being and "is defined as a cognitive set that is based on a reciprocally derived sense of successful (a) agency (goal-directed determination) and (b) pathways (planning of ways to meet goals) (Snyder, et al., 1991, p. 571). This definition of hope closely aligns with the YPQA indicator Engagement, and despite being developed by psychologists, does not feel overly clinical.

The work of Kim England (1994) regarding reflexivity, positionality and feminist research greatly inspired my approach to this research and understanding my role as a researcher. England challenges researchers to accept their human subjectivity, meaning their positionality and biography, and asserts the importance of a reflexive fieldwork practice. England explains reflexivity as a “self-critical sympathetic introspection and the self-conscious analytical scrutiny of the self as a researcher”, arguing reflexivity “allows the researcher to be more open to any challenges to their theoretical position that fieldwork almost inevitably raises” (England K. , 1994, p. 82). England critiques the *objective* positivist stance, noting its interference with the realities of social research. She insists research methods should embrace, not dismiss, “the openness and culturally constructed nature of the social world, peppered with contradictions and complexities” (81). My reflexive practice included taking field notes following each meeting on the activities, participants, and group rituals as well as reflecting on power relations. For example, I regularly pondered the following:

- How does my biography and positionality show up in this space?
- What am I doing that is influencing my ability and inability to build trust with research participants?
- How am I interpreting my observations? What biases do I have?
- Does my work reinforce deficit-based narratives of urban youth and people living in public housing?
- What does it mean *for me* to study Black girls living in public housing?

The goal of participant observation is to spend as much time with the people or culture of study, to learn the norms and rituals, as well as the mundane (Bernard, 2013). Using participant observation led to a more comprehensive insight to the participant experience. Taking part in activities alongside the program participants, having formal and informal group and one-on-one conversations, and hearing stories about what the program *used to be like*, textured my understanding of their critical consciousness, their experiences doing photovoice, and what their

outlooks¹³ were like on a day-to-day basis. My past experiences as a program coordinator and program evaluator prepared me to notice. The twenty-five hours I spent participating in the program provided context and complexity, strengthening my interpretation of the survey and interview data. Additionally, my taking part in the program alongside the youth developed greater comfort, trust, and honesty when doing the interviews.

The semi-structured interview was incorporated to capture the diversity of experiences in PV, living in MV-AG, and each participant's sense of hope and healing. Robyn Longhurst argues the semi-structured interview is a dynamic method to capture "discussions of meaning, identity, subjectivity, politics, knowledge, power and representation" (2010, p. 112). Per Longhurst, the "semi-structured interviews are about talking with people but in ways that are self-conscious, orderly and partially structured" (p. 103). Interviews reflecting this approach are conversational and informal in tone seeking personal responses in the participants' words (p. 105). In this project interviews were valuable in understanding the participants' perceptions of their own wellness, past and present, and how the program has contributed to radical healing. Seven interviews were conducted with program participants, each lasting around thirty minutes. The interviews provided anecdotal information about experiences in the community and what impact PV has had in their lives. Esteem, outlook, and critical consciousness were best captured through conversation and observation.

For this research, my priority was to create an engaging evaluation process. Due to the over-reliance of the survey in afterschool youth program evaluations, I wanted to explore strategies that incorporated more dynamic participant engagement throughout the research. I used a survey to gather basic information about program participation, experiences in the

¹³ Outlook regarded as a continuum between fatalistic and hopeful.

program compared to their neighborhood and school, and used a liker scale to measure changes in behaviors, views, and aspirations comparing pre-program involvement to the present. To supplement the survey, interviews, and participant observation, I created weekly individual and group reflection activities inspired by YPQA and the RHF. I incorporated visual and written reflection tasks based on weekly evaluation themes. After reviewing the theme as a group, participants individually completed their reflection and set a future-focused program goal based on the theme. Program goals were posted on a vision board in the classroom.¹⁴ These goals helped me understand their hopes and what they deem possible in their future. The reflective group activities were organized to engage in group processing. They allowed participants to exchange ideas and discuss how individual experiences differed from group experiences. By incorporating personal reflection activities, group discussion and future visioning corresponding to each evaluation theme, I felt I could better reflect the participant perspective than a purely observation-based assessment. In the end, the reflection activities were most useful in understanding the ways photovoice projects were meaningful, challenging, and engaging (Wang, 2006).

In recent years, a swell of tools have been created to evaluate the quality and outcomes of OST youth programs. Evaluation data is used to leverage grant funds and inform program development. Acquiring and implementing these evaluation tools can be costly to youth program providers in terms of staff training, program time, and the evaluation tool itself. Commonly these evaluation tools include a participant survey and/or observation by a co-worker or trained assessor. In this research, I wanted to challenge notions of *reliable* evaluation tools and assessors

¹⁴ Mid-way through this research, Mercy Housing (PV's parent organization) began incorporating the PQA, Weikart Center's youth program quality assessment tool, nationwide into its programs. Having incorporated the Quality Pyramid into my evaluation developed PV staff's understanding of the PQA assessment indicators and provided an informal test-run with Mercy Housing's only teen-specific youth program.

by focusing more on incorporating youth engagement in the evaluation process than on the tool itself. Prioritizing youth engagement had many benefits to my research. First, hope and healing are not outcomes most, if any, OST program evaluation tools assess. Creating a youth-centered approach provided a wider array of data points on the topics of hope and healing. Second, expanding evaluation strategies beyond survey and observation created various ways for youth to express their experiences and opinions (written, oral, group, individual) over a period of three months. Finally, this approach challenges the positivist approach to *data-driven* youth program evaluation and tested ways youth programs can increase youth participant in evaluation efforts.

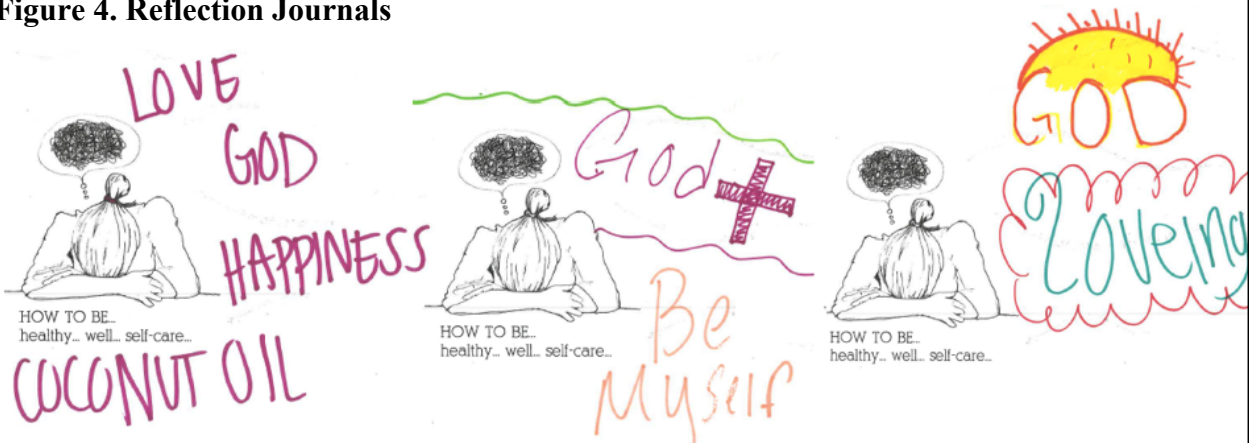
Positionality

Throughout the course of my field research, the program coordinator, two adult volunteers, and ten youth participated in PV. The PV youth share many experiences, preferences and identities. One participant lives in Alder Grove and the rest in Marina Vista, all living in the community for a minimum of six year (but an average of 10). The all-female group ranges in age from 14-19 and participants attend four different schools (but most attend C.K. McClatchy High School). Participants describe themselves as “goofballs”, “make up enthusiasts”, “destined to make it big”, “mature”, and “God loving”. All participants self-identify as either “Black” or “African American”, and two multi-racial participants also identify as “Native American” and “Mexican”. In the past year, all participants began regularly attending weekend service at Bayside Midtown Church (Bayside). Several participants have described both PV and Bayside as ‘like family’ and “having a lot of soul”.

PV meetings are held in a recently refurbished elementary school computer lab. Upon arriving to Maya’s classroom, PV participants share compliments on their hair, makeup and outfits. Ayanna regularly “cat walks” through the classroom modeling her look as everyone else

encourages her moves and comments on what they like. Following affirmations, participants often make tea and pick a snack. Discussion about the snack options (typically a variety of granola bars, trail mix, fruit snacks, beef jerky, and popcorn) occurs with regularity as the participants chose two snacks. Before programming officially starts, participants regularly bemoan their schoolwork and teachers but routinely do their homework in Maya's classroom when they arrive early and on non-PV days. Throughout the meetings Jianna frequently "snaps"¹⁵ selfies including those sitting nearby in the photos. Jianna also plays music on her phone during work time, typically playing early 2000's R&B. Participants frequently inquire about the romantic lives of the program staff, adult volunteers and myself. Without hesitation participants asked, "can I come" to dates, Maya's weekend excursion to Santa Barbara, and my upcoming wedding.

Figure 4. Reflection Journals



Images from the reflection journals of (left to right) Alice, Jianna, and Tori. For this activity participants were prompted to write or draw activities they do for self-care and/or things that make them feel healthy or well.

¹⁵ Takes a photo on the social media application Snap Chat

I was raised in Wisconsin living in a four-bedroom home with my parents and two older brothers. Today I live a few neighborhoods east of MV-AG in Oak Park, a neighborhood undergoing rapid gentrification and referenced as a cautionary tale when discussing Broadway Corridor development. I have eight years' experience working with youth afterschool, seven of those years were working with high school students in Saint Paul, Minnesota doing action research projects like photovoice. In Saint Paul, most K-12 teachers and many youth workers are middle-class, white women. Young, white, college educated youth workers accumulating service learning hours or working for AmeriCorps often carried a 'savior complex', believing they would fix poverty and the achievement gap. And the "jaded" youth workers with more experience often framed programming challenges with deficit-based and classist thinking. Because of these experiences I have been wary about myself as a researcher, specifically studying MV-AG and PV. I was concerned being a white, out of state, graduate student would create too large a distance between the participants and myself. And feared the participants would not feel comfortable opening up to me.

To address my discomfort as a researcher, I practiced critical reflection throughout the conception, design, execution and analysis of this research. I was eager to build rapport with the young people given my research is inherently personal. Overtime, as I participated in the program and developed trust with the participants, I became more comfortable within the group and as a social science researcher. I have a transformative vision for the youth development field, which challenges current norms and practices, and I believe my experience and passion for the field deserve a platform. Kim England's work has helped me accept the inevitability of my biography shaping my conclusions (1994). While undoubtedly imperfect, my intention with this

research is to accurately name the experiences of the PV participants and identify the ways healing and well-being are supported at PV.

Methods

This research comprised two phases, first getting to know program participants and second, conducting the assessment. I wanted to begin cultivating relationships with the program participants as soon as possible, knowing how long it can take to build trusting relationships with young people. I organized weekly meet ups with four of the six veteran participants over the summer prior to the assessment. The participants were included based on availability. Most were interning for a literacy program at Leataata over the summer. The other participants were staying with family outside of Sacramento for the summer and were not able to join. On three occasions in July I met with the participants for an hour and a half lunch meeting. Officially I was there to help them write their resumes, unofficially I was there to build rapport. During this time, I was able to establish relationships with the participants without an association to Maya, the PV Program Coordinator. At times an adult student intern joined our meetings, but most of the time was spent with just me and the participants. After meeting with the participants on three occasions I concluded it was time well spent. I got important facilitation insight, learning which types of activities promoted participation and which were less successful. I was encouraged by the participants' engagement in the various activities throughout the three meetings, and felt we had successfully established some trust given a conversation we had regarding race, police brutality and incarceration following the deaths of Alton Sterling and Philando Castile, on July 5, 2016 and July 6, 2016, respectively.

The second phase of research began September 12, 2016, when Project Voice resumed their weekly Monday meetings. Maya and I agreed for the first five weeks I would facilitate the

first forty-five minutes of each meeting and she would facilitate the final forty-five minutes. This meeting design supported my desire to facilitate large group reflection activities and observe the program when Maya facilitated the final stages of their current photovoice project. The set up was intended to minimize the disruption of the interview process, since I could interview participants during Maya's facilitation time.

It was difficult to get through my planned evaluation activities the first two weeks. Between late arrivals and lengthy opening ice breaker activities facilitated by Maya, I was starting my activities 20-30 minutes behind schedule each week. After the second week, I asked to facilitate the opening activities so that I could plan activities that served both as an ice breaker and connected to my evaluation goals and topics. This adjustment increased my time facilitating, however, late arrivals and inconsistent attendees continued to complicate my personal and large group reflection activities.

Table 4. Evaluation Dates	
Program Date	Evaluation Theme
September 12, 2016	Evaluation/Research Introduction
September 19, 2016	Place vs Space
September 26, 2016	Peer Interaction + Safety
October 3, 2016	Engagement and Leadership
October 17, 2016	Health and Wellness
See Appendix B for the reflection tools	

The survey was created to incorporate the program quality themes of the YPQA as well as questions regarding hope, mental health, and wellness. The survey was structured to compare community and high school experiences to Project Voice. By reviewing the three social locations I could separate three of the most influential social spaces in the participants' lives. The survey questions regarding hope and health were structured to compare the participant's dispositions prior to and following their participation in Project Voice. Maya added two questions to the

survey so that she could use the results for an upcoming grant report. On the first Monday in October I administered survey to all but two participants who were not present. The two absent participants took the survey the following week.

Asking participants about their hopes was originally inspired by their photovoice project. Participants met with adults living in public housing and asked about their hopes and dreams but did not themselves want to answer the questions. When creating the interview protocol, I incorporated the very questions PV used in their interviews. This strategy was used to because the participants were already familiar with the questions and because there wasn't enough time to create this research in a participatory manner, using the participants' questions was an opportunity to include the youth in the design of my research. Prior to conducting the interviews the entire group read through the questions to test clarity. Maya and I estimated I would complete two interviews per week and conclude within one month. Each interview took place in the library, an adjoining room to the main program space, or classroom 5, directly across the outdoor hall, and took between 20 and 30 minutes. Participants volunteered to be interviewed and gave written consent to have them audio recorded. I began interviewing participants in early November but preparation for their photography showcase on November 29th took precedent throughout the month. Due to prioritizing showcase prep and the winter holidays, interviews were not completed until January 9th. See Appendix C for the Interview Protocol.

All survey, interview, observation and vision board data was coded based on CARMA components, the Quality Pyramid and Snyder's Hope Scale (1991). A summary of the findings was shared with Maya on April 5, 2017 where she confirmed the conclusions were reflective of the program and participant experience. Unfortunately, this data has not, and will not, be

reviewed with research participants prior to submission. However, I will be presenting the research results and conclusions with them on June 5, 2017.

Research Challenges

As with youth programming, participatory activities and program assessment, there were challenges throughout this research process. A general challenge regarded the times of the evaluation itself. The assessment followed the design and execution of PV's latest photovoice project. Many discussions regarding goals, concerns and challenges took place prior to my evaluation. So many observations occurred while the group was preparing for their showcase; determining which photos would be included in the showcase, preparing speeches for the showcase, and exploring what to do for PV following the showcase.

In terms of the research methods, the individual and group reflection activities were the most compromised evaluation strategy due to the fluctuating attendance of veteran participants. Of the five program veterans, one participant missed 1 of 4 reflective evaluation activities and two participants each missed 2 of 4 reflective evaluation activities. Additionally, the participant with an absence brought her reflection journal home and never returned it so her entries were not included in the analysis. When planning the reflection activities, I failed to anticipate Project Voice gaining program participants and hadn't prepared activity adaptations for newcomers. Despite the participation irregularities, the individual reflection activities were not as engaging to the participants or rich in data as I had expected. Each activity was meant to encourage creative expression (drawing, design, poetry), but respondents most often created bullet point written responses. My attempt to foster rich biographical narratives was unsuccessful.

Throughout my time with PV it was difficult for me to articulate questions in a manner that was clear to the group members. I was regularly asked "like, what do you mean" and

responses frequently did not answer the questions I was asking. I felt uneasy having to clarify my research questions using examples or different language because I risked influencing or leading the responses. One strategy I implemented following week 2 was including a group discussion introducing the research topic prior to the individual reflections. Often, when introducing the week's evaluation theme, I found the participants were unclear, unfamiliar or unaware of the topic. By discussing what I meant as a group first, the participants reflections more accurately aligned with the feedback I was seeking. Another solution bridging communication styles was having two "practice" interviews. During the first two interviews, I unintentionally muted my microphone, while it was disappointing to lose the data, the interviews served as run through, they helped me revise, clarify, and add needed questions to my interview protocol. And thankfully the two practice interviewees agreed to doing a second interview. Yet, despite my interventions, across all interviews it became clear that the phrase 'mental health' does not resonate with participants. Despite attempts to reframe questions about mental and emotional health, I never discovered phrasing that resonated with the participants. Thankfully my observations provided plentiful data regarding participants' mental and emotional health.

Approaching this project, I expected time to be a key constraint given the nature of youth programming and the brief time available to complete field work. I was correct. Be it facilitating, interviews, implementing participatory research practices, time was a constant variable. Two activities and discussions were repeated to ensure input from long-term program members. The amount of time within the program was also a challenge. While I was supposed to have forty-five minutes each week, I usually had thirty minutes. When I began interviews participants were desperately needed for showcase preparation. Therefore, completing the interviews took considerably longer than expected. The final timing barrier occurred around the Thanksgiving

holiday. I had not anticipated that programming time would shift. Meetings were added on non-program days leading up to the showcase. Unfortunately, I was not available for meetings on different days and times.

Taking detailed field notes following each meeting proved more difficult and time consuming than I had anticipated. I was getting home around 6:30pm and between dinner and additional schoolwork I often delayed writing up field notes until the next day. If I were doing this project over I would be more intentional, scheduling in time to write field notes into my schedule. I underestimated how time consuming the task was. During each reflection activity participants created a corresponding program goal, which they shared verbally and then posted on a vision board. Having participants set improvement goals was an intentional component to my evaluation design, but when planning the program for the rest of winter and spring, the goals posted on the vision board were not incorporated in the conversation. This made me question the value of the activity and to what extent the youth influence PV programming decisions.

Flexibility, staying connected to the big picture, and balancing program and research goals were constant touchstones throughout this research project. These orientations helped me stay calm when my interviewing schedule was extended by several weeks, when participant attendance waivered, and when my time facilitating was condensed. In any partnership, strong communication impacts the experience of both parties. I'm confident the regular check ins Maya and I had over email prior to programming and in person on program days before and after meetings, led to both of our goals and needs being met.

CHAPTER 4 – DATA

Upon entering room 8 of Leataata for PV, you see a table with snacks, refreshments and the sign in sheet. Beyond the refreshments is a sitting area and large 10 foot windows along the entire far wall. Along the wall to your right is a long table with program supplies; pens, pencils, markers, crayons, glue and scissors. Beyond the supplies is a round table with four chairs and Ms. Maya's desk. On the white board behind Ms. Maya's desk books by Black authors and about Black characters rest on marker tray. On the far side of the room is a long rectangular table with eight chairs. Two wood pallets have been transformed into a divider that separates the rectangular table and sitting area.

The sitting area is the most populated corner of the room. It includes a couch, two bean bag chairs, two reclining plastic outdoor chairs and four small ottomans. All the furniture rests on a large, colorful area rug. The sitting area has a cozy feel with the various seating choices, natural light, pallet wall and large bulletin board on the wall displaying "I love my selfies" photos and affirmations. In the sitting area participants sit close to one another but limit physical touch. The participants sit on different chairs next to different participants each week. No one claims one chair over the other. Prior to meeting in Ms. Maya's current room¹⁶, PV meetings took place around the 12-person table. When given the option between the table and sitting area the participants always chose the sitting area.

On this program day¹⁷ I arrived early and ended up coloring to fill time before programming started. As the girls arrived, said "what's up", and grabbed a snack they took

¹⁶ For the first two years of Project Voice the group met in a different classroom.

¹⁷ The scenarios, descriptions, and dialogue in this section are a composite created using survey, interview and field note data.

notice of my coloring. Jianna ended up looking for a coloring sheet and found a natural hair coloring book. She took out a page and grabbed the cup of Sharpies next to Ms. Maya's desk. When she sat down Kylah was returning from another room with a now full Brita and water heater. Kylah asked Jianna if she wanted tea. After ten minutes of careful consideration Jianna chose chai tea. As more girls arrived they asked Jianna where she got her coloring page and ended up grabbing one for themselves and finding a spot in the sitting area. By the time Kylah made tea Jada and Tori were coloring alongside Jianna and myself. We all shared the Sharpies, often asking someone to pass a certain color our way.

When Ms. Maya was ready to begin program she asked everyone to put down their snacks, tea and coloring and to grab a yoga mat. She wanted the group to "do mindfulness", an activity we tried for the first time the week prior. Ms. Maya explained we needed to grab a mat and find a spot on the floor to sit quietly with our eyes shut. A few girls followed instructions while others protested. Jianna asked to lay on the couch instead of the floor. Alice tried negotiating for five minutes instead of ten. Tori asked if we had to close our eyes again. Ms. Maya gently encouraged everyone to find a spot on the floor. She hesitantly agreed to let Jianna lay on the couch and told the group "we're going to try ten minutes of open or closed eyes mindfulness".

Two minutes into the activity the room became quiet. The ten bodies lying on the floor filled up the otherwise spacious classroom. Ayanna arrived late and was surprised to see everyone on the floor when she entered the room. In a soft voice, Ms. Maya asked her to quietly come in and grab a yoga mat. Ayanna's body language appeared reluctant, but she grabbed a mat and laid on her side looking at her phone. After a few more minutes the room began to gain volume. First it was bodies repositioning. Then sneezes. Then giggles, and finally chatter. Ms.

Maya tried to quiet the muffled voices but never regained silence. When Ms. Maya said everyone could open their eyes and sit up Kylah, Jianna and Ayanna immediately shared how much they disliked the activity, claiming “the floor is uncomfortable” and “I don’t like silence”. Ms. Maya asked the other participants how they liked the activity and Jada and Tori said they “liked being quiet” because “it feels good”.

After mindfulness, the group sat back down in the sitting area. I prepared a few evaluation-based activities to discuss the YPQA themes safe environment and engagement. When everyone was settled (and a few girls resumed coloring) I asked everyone to think about what makes them feel safe. Immediately Alice said “my bed” and a few girls nodded their heads in agreement. Jianna went second, saying “my home”. Then Ayanna jumped in saying “God makes me feel safe” and looked at me to explain “Project Voice is what got me closer to God”. “I think Project Voice is a safe place for me”, said Jada. “It’s very supportive. I think I have very supportive teachers¹⁸ and I just like how we all get along”.

I thanked everyone for sharing then asked what makes the group feel unsafe? “Bugs” Sarah, an adult volunteer, said seemingly embarrassed. Most girls laughed but agreed that bugs are scary. With this question, the girls were more reluctant to share. Jianna mentioned “the dark” and again the group giggled and agreed. After a long pause, I asked “so beside bugs and the dark ya’ll feel safe”? Jada was quick to reply, saying “I believe everybody knows each other, everybody’s family. Sometimes it’s not good. Sometimes it is. But I just think everybody has family so you’re always safe”. Tori jumped in clarifying that “the stereotype is MV-AG it’s ghetto, it’s like the projects, it’s like low budget, everybody there is poor, they can’t make it on

¹⁸ In this statement, Jada is referring to the PV staff and volunteers as teachers.

their own, it's nasty, there's nothing but violence happens, it's drug and alcohol all the time and just sadness everywhere". Ayanna and Alice agreed saying the stereotypes are so untrue.

To clarify Jianna shared "at night time you know there's a lot of kids out and then sometimes be like, they don't be shooting, they say they be shooting but I don't hear it. It's like late late late at nights. So you gotta be safe. And some people be stealing". Defensively Ayanna said "this neighborhood is not bad. I literally walked outside of my neighborhood at 12 o'clock at night, 2 o'clock. Like my neighborhood is not bad as people make it seem and stuff". Jasmine, who rarely speaks up in large group discussions shared, "I've had a lot of bad experiences in this community so I just go home. I wish crime would go down. Jasmine ended her comment explaining "crime is bad everywhere really, in my opinion". Alice responded saying "I think just cause I've lived here for so long it just, it's just comfortable for me now. But my little siblings cannot go anywhere without me or my mom. We have to see them."

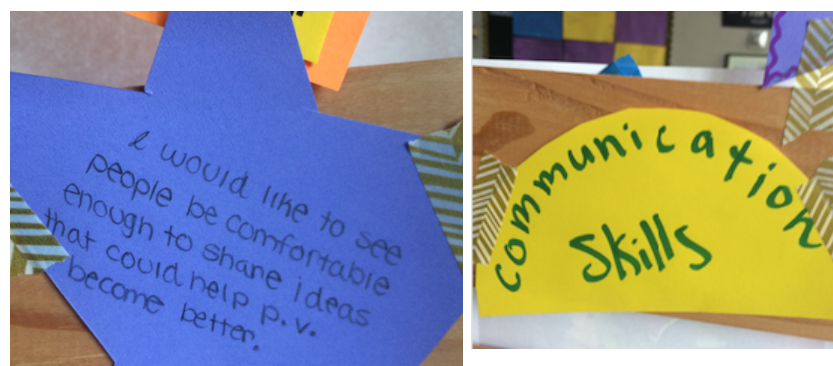
Again, I thanked everyone for sharing. Similar to past group conversations the girls listened to each other, many shared their opinion, and for the most part, they didn't talk over one another. I explained that the next activity would focus on planning and decision making and asked if they would like to work as a large group or in small groups. Seemingly everyone wanted to work as a large group so I put two pieces of flip chart paper on the wall with a few questions already written out.

"In the past how have decisions been made about what you do during program" I asked. "Topics are provided" said one participant. "Yeah, we follow the topic of the day", said another. To clarify I asked if the participants ever choose the topics for check in or the other activities they do during program and Kylah explained that "Ms. Maya runs the program". To be more specific I asked what decisions participants made for their latest photovoice project. Tori replied

saying “we help set up showcases and write our speeches”. Jianna followed up explaining that “we asked to go to San Francisco and to stay with those nuns again”.

After talking as a large group, I asked everyone to grab a piece of paper and write one leadership goal they have for youth who participate in PV. A few girls thought about their response while others immediately began writing. When I asked if anyone would share their goal for youth leadership Ayanna jumped in saying “trendsetter”¹⁹. Jianna said “I hope participants will get mature like I have”. I asked what it means to get mature and Alice explained without PV “I think that my life would be a mess, like I would not do school work as much, or I wouldn’t have learned as much, and like I wouldn’t have matured as much. So I would probably just be in more of a lower mindset than I am right now”. Jianna added, “I used to be so rude to Ms. Maya, like I used to be so like goofy and like immature. Now I’m just like, I feel like I’m mature now. I’m mature like, I’m mature now so I’m like, I grew up from what I was when I started. I was like very bad, I wasn’t listening and now I’m like chill and respectful and stuff”. I thanked Alice and Jianna for explaining. Then others shared their goals, several stating “communication” and Jada said she wanted participants to get better at “compromise”.

Figure 5. Leadership Goal



¹⁹ Several times throughout my field research participants said they wanted to be trendsetters. Typically, they would hold their phones close to their face pretending to pose for a selfie while saying this. I came to understand, through observations and conversations with Ms. Maya, trendsetter as becoming popular on the social media application Instagram. “Instagram famous”, and therefore trendsetter, implies thousands of followers, product endorsements and influence.

After sharing program goals Ms. Maya said that she would like the girls to help plan and lead²⁰ activities in the future. She asked, “what types of activities do you want to do after our showcase”? Immediately participants were shouting over each other, “field trips”, “restaurants”, “FIELD TRIPS!”. Ms. Maya asked the girls to speak one at a time. While she was asking “where do you want to go on field trips” Alice cut in saying “group bonding!”. Group bonding echoed throughout the room, “yeah group bonding”, “group bonding sounds good”, “that would be fun”. Ms. Maya turned to Alice and asked what she meant by group bonding. Without hesitation Alice said to make sure “we right on the inside”. Ms. Maya asked if group bonding “would be like team building and sharing”? Jianna jumped in saying “I hope not, I don’t want to share my feelings”. Alice replied to Jianna’s comment saying, “that’s right just ask her counselor” and the two girls laughed. Alice explained that she doesn’t want to share feelings either, she just wants to do stuff together and work on the self. Ms. Maya did not ask Alice what she meant by working on the self. Ayanna reasoned that “more field trips and food could maybe be part of the group bonding as well”, Alice replied “exactly”.

After listening to the girls, Ms. Maya turned to the two adult volunteers, Sarah²¹ and Tatianna, and asked what they would like to do next. The energy in the room shifted from light hearted and fun to a serious tone. The girl became quiet. Sarah went first saying she would like to do more service trips. One of the girls asked, “what’s that”? And Sarah explained that it’s “like what we did in Mexico but we would do it locally in Sacramento and volunteer with those

²⁰ Ms. Maya mentioned on three different occasions in conversations prior and following program, that she would like the participants to think of, plan, and facilitate program activities. She typically referred to ice breakers and check in activities as opportunities for youth planning and facilitation.

²¹ Sarah found out about PV through Bayside and has been attending weekly meetings and chaperoned Bayside youth trips to Mexico and San Diego in her first year as an adult volunteer. Sarah has lived in Sacramento for about five years, but was not familiar with MV-AG prior to volunteering. She is in her mid 30’s and is a college-educated white woman working in physical rehabilitation with people who have suffered traumatic brain injuries.

less fortunate”. All the girls that went to Mexico (Ayanna, Alice, Tori and Jianna) quickly agreed that service work would be a good idea, never specifying why they thought it was a good idea. Tatianna went next saying she wanted to focus on preparing for college next. Several girls, seemingly surprised by Tatianna’s idea, said in unison “really?”.

Ms. Maya jumped in, bringing her voice down in volume and asking for all the girls’ attention with a serious tone. She explained that some nights she cannot sleep because she’s worried about what the girls will have as options after high school. Kyla blurted “we keep you up at night? You can’t sleep, that’s messed up Ms. Maya!”. A few other girls started poking fun of Ms. Maya. She cut in saying “it’s really serious, I want to make sure that everyone is prepared to go to college or has a plan for what’s next after high school”. Tatianna cut in saying “most of you are in your junior year and next year you’ll have SAT tests and applications and I just want to make sure you’re ready”. Alice clarified, “the SAT tests are actually this year”, which sparked many muffled comments between several clusters of girls discussing when college related activities were happening.

Ms. Maya asked the group if after December, PV could focus on group bonding and preparing for college. Ayanna replied before anyone else had the chance to speak, “college isn’t for everyone”. Jianna seconded, adding “they push college on everyone but it’s not what everyone wants”. Ms. Maya agreed with Ayanna and Jianna specifying “the time will be spent on college prep or making a plan for after high school”. Tatianna suggested calling it “next steps”. Ms. Maya continued, “whether or not you want to go to college you need a plan for after high school so that you can support yourself”. Ayanna and Alice agreed, Ayanna explained passionately that she “needs a job this summer”. There was a lot of undecipherable chatter among neighbors but it all seemed positive, like combining group bonding and “Next Steps” was

a good plan following the showcase. Ayanna ended the conversation by telling Ms. Maya, “I still can’t believe you couldn’t sleep over this”.

Before ending the meeting Ms. Maya said she had some announcements. First, “who will be coming tomorrow for the math tutor”? Jada and Tori raised their hands. Okay, said Ms. Maya, and “who still needs to turn in their paperwork for the Bayside Mexico trip”? Jianna, Ayanna, and Jada raised their hands. Ms. Maya reminded them that the paperwork is due this Sunday, “it needs to be in if you want to go. Last thing, the natural haircare workshops will start in three weeks. So you should all come with your hair washed but without product in three weeks.” “No product?” asked Alice. “No product” Ms. Maya said with slow enunciation, looking at each of the girls in the eye while speaking. Most girls nodded their head and left talking to one another. As usual Kylah and Sarah left together so Kylah could get a ride home²². Tori and Jada stayed to help Ms. Maya, myself pick up the room before everyone left.

Examining the Radical Healing Framework

The following data is in conversation with the RHF’s CARMA components; culture, agency, relationships, meaning, and achievement.

Culture

The cultural element of the RHF encompasses exploring the history, traditions and practices of racial, ethnic and indigenous groups as well as urban youth culture. While there were several examples of Black cultural exploration, there was no discussion of the history, traditions, or practices of non-Black identities like Mexican and Native American people. Surprisingly,

²² Even though Kylah lives in MV-AG she lives significantly further from Leataata than the rest of the participants and typically gets a ride home when it is dark outside.

Mexican culture was not discussed in conversations about the past nor upcoming Bayside trip. And perhaps most striking, whiteness was not named nor discussed in PV, particularly how whiteness and white supremacy shape American culture, public policy, and their experiences as urban youth of color. The adults never discussed their own cultural identities nor experiences as Black, multi-racial and white women²³. While, PV lacked evidence of urban youth culture being explored in a formal manner, there was evidence of a program culture. PV participants share many customs, attitudes, behaviors, and frequent many of the same social institutions.

Agency

As explained in the RHF, agency refers to “the individual and collective ability to act, create, and change external and personal issues. Agency compels youth to explore their personal power to transform problems in to possibilities” (Ginwright, 2016, p.26). In PV there was more evidence of youth exerting power on personal issues than external issues. Personal agency shaped the relationships PV participants were and were not willing to have with peers in their community, most notably their decisions to avoid certain social circles and stay home more often²⁴. Alice explained in her interview that she chooses to “...not get involved with the rest of like the bad crowd [referring to certain teens in her neighborhood]. Like trying to stay away from that cause you’re so influenced by it. And you just kinda want to go that way, but you can’t. You gotta like make sure that you stay going forward or else it’s all bad”. Additionally, all participants have chosen to attend Bayside Church in a consistent manner, alongside the program coordinator and adult volunteers, even though their families do not attend. Kyla explained “I

²³ Ms. Maya is Black, Tatianna multi-racial, and Sarah white.

²⁴ According to Ms. Maya, some participants stay home to isolate themselves from the community at large and even their family. In her opinion this is a way they manage their depression.

went [to church] sometimes before Project Voice. I had another church that I was going to but I chose myself. Like my family doesn't go, but I just go to Bayside. But I chose like to leave the church because there wasn't like a lot going for like the youth. So, I needed something that was going to help me like keep me into God. But also like, have something there to like open up my eyes and stuff. So I chose Bayside".

Within Project Voice, participants had relatively few opportunities to reflect and make decisions regarding the structure and focus of the program. Per our discussion about youth leadership, Kyla explained "most reflection occurs after difficult meetings when we have disagreements and poor communication. Planning of the day-to-day programming and photovoice showcases is done by Ms. Maya". Youth planning and decision making often included deciding between pre-determined options and helping execute an existing plan, such as setting up the showcase space. The order of activities was often negotiable while the activities themselves were not. However, there was no evidence of PV participants requesting different activities. Overall, besides mindfulness, they were willing to do planned activities.

While there was more evidence of personal than external agency, the survey suggests participants feel more confident in their ability to make change in their community, to be a leader in their community, and to stand up against those in power on behalf of their community because of their participation in Project Voice. Through conversations about The Mill at Broadway (The Mill)²⁵, it is clear participants want to be agents of change in their community. Ayanna explains:

I feel like umm where was our input on [The Mill]? Cause that's part of us too. That is definitely part of our neighborhood and he [the owner] just bought it... he just bought it, put in these houses knowing that maybe, most likely, no, knowing, he put up these houses and made them pretty much for people that can afford them. I feel like it's making us look even worse. Like, we already been having these buildings for over 100 year and you put in these brand-new ones in, have

²⁵ The Mill is a market-rate housing development of penthouses, homes, bungalows, courts and villas that has been built with great expediency since July 2016 directly across McClatchy Way from Marina Vista.

nothing to do with us. Like what? Where was our input on it again? Like I'm confused and I'm a little upset that they're rebuilding in the Black Gates²⁶ too. We're the only ones that's still not getting built up.

The participants expressed feelings that the community (MV-AG residents) didn't have input in the planning and design. Furthermore, Ayanna, Jasmine and Tori felt The Mill was going to reinforce stereotypes about MV-AG. Jasmine explained "I just feel like honestly, they just want more, no offense, they just want more rich white people to come in the neighborhood. Like, so that we can get more attention instead of just poor Black people". The participants felt knowledgeable about housing development, given their time spent on the CNI project, and were frustrated they were not included in the planning.

Table 5. Survey Data – Perceived Agency				
To what degree do you feel able to...	Before	After	Total Change	Change Only
Make your community healthier or stronger	2.14	3.57	1.43	1.67
Make change for your community	2.43	3.57	1.14	1.60
Be a leader in your community	3.00	4.14	1.14	1.14
Stand up to those in power on behalf of your community	2.29	3.57	1.29	1.29
Change the way outsiders view your community	3.57	4.57	1.00	1.40
1 Never 3 Sometimes 5 Always				

Relationships

Participants discussed their relationships with adults in the community, at school, and as with adults in the program. Kylah differentiated the adults by explaining "the adults at Project Voice... listen more. Whether than, at my school or like in my community. Because in my

²⁶ The "Black Gates" is a nearby Affordable housing apartment complex managed by Mercy Housing undergoing redevelopment.

community no one, they talk but like, it's not really like "yeah tell me about your problems". It's like "tell me about your problems" and I'll go tell everybody else. But at my school it's like there's so many kids, and there's teachers but there's not a lot of teachers. So like you can talk to them, but then it's like, it's kinda like they have other stuff like. So it's kinda like it's not as important".

Overall there was a level of disappointment in community adults, wanting them to 'show up' to school and Project Voice events, to gather and celebrate kids, and to be trustworthy. Tori explained "I think [adults] could do better but I feel like a lot of people don't know how cause they weren't taught or haven't seen it or been shown it before". Jada shared "I think some adults with children they know this is not like a very good community... and like they know that they could do better. So, it's like a little tough for them". Observations and activities during programming revealed that many participants have intimate, often normalized, experiences with family members being incarceration and death by murder. During one program check-in, it was shared that one person's brother "got out", one person's cousin was killed, and one person's cousin was sentenced to five years and the other to seven. While this wasn't reflective of a normal check-in, the criminal justice system and violence are prevalent forces in most participant's lives, likely impacting relationships with community adults.

The staff and volunteers at Project Voice consistently demonstrated patience, acceptance and concern for the participants. They participated in activities, shared the same information they asked the youth to share. Many youth told stories describing the adults as role models, sharing the significance of having relationships with adults that have grown over time and having professional women with college experience in their lives. Tori described the support she gets from PV adults as "it's not just like school is very very very very important to them, it's like

they're actually providing things that can help you with it. It's not just like "go to school, finish school, then go to college and finish it". It's like I'll help you through what you need help with. Like I'll give you tutoring, I'll stay late for you, like these people have lives and they're with us like all the time". These adult relationships are specific to Project Voice and different from other social spaces. On the survey, all participants identified feeling supported by adults in Project Voice, with about half of the participants sometimes or never feeling supported by adults in the community or at school²⁷.

The most significant opportunity youth and adults had to share personal stories and interests was during the check-ins, which occurred in the beginning of each meeting. Check ins were used as opportunities to explore where people wanted to travel internationally, to how their day or their weekend was, to sharing a time they felt safe. It was difficult to discuss fears in a group setting because the participants actively denied having fears or being bothered by tragedy. For instance, during the check in where one person's cousin was killed, Jianna was the first to say something asking, "why did you have to bring the mood down"? And Alice dismissed the significance of the information shared by saying this is "just life", implying it is a normal part of life. Likewise, when the program coordinator shared her concern over the participants' preparedness for life after high school, the youth laughed, mocked, and downplayed the seriousness of her concerns.

Despite an overall resistance to share personal feelings and experiences during group discussions, the survey reveals youth feel more connected to, and trusting in of others. Trust was the indicator with the greatest improvement via the survey and was spoken about by all

²⁷ It is worth noting that compared to the adults in MV-AG, the PV adults have class and educational privilege. At the time of my fieldwork all three women had full time jobs, a significant other and no children. All three see PV as a way of practicing their faith and care deeply about the well-being of the participants.

participants in their interviews. Jasmine described her experience as “I’m actually a lot more open. I’m a lot more trusting with people because I realize that not everybody is just out to get you. Being in this program showed me that. Jada further explains “Well it was a lot going on with me and actually after Project Voice I just felt like I didn’t have to keep that inside. I could actually share, you know, anything, like I said anything that’s on my mind I can share. It’s just really safe place”.

Table 6. Survey Data – Psychological Well-being				
How often do you feel...	Before	After	Total Change	Change Only
Playful	3.71	4.29	0.57	1.00
Deeply connected to others	2.71	3.71	1.00	1.17
Confident	3.86	4.57	0.71	1.25
Trusting of others	1.71	3.43	1.71	2.00
Mentally healthy	2.43	3.43	1.00	1.75
1 Never 3 Sometimes 5 Always				

Meaning

The goal of meaning is to support young people in discovering their purpose and developing an understanding of their role in advancing justice. This takes form through conversations about what gives life meaning, developing a critical consciousness (self, social, global) and activities that promote self-discovery. Several people have said PV makes them more committed to doing their homework and helped them think about what’s next after high school. Kylah, Jasmine and Jada spoke about their purpose in specific terms (cosmetologist, counselor, and gynecologist respectively), however, most talked about wanting to do “something big” and to better the community in general terms. My conversations with participants around making change most often referred to improving (redeveloping) their housing and eradicating the negative stereotypes of MV-AG. Several noted wanting to do something in the future that helps people.

A clear strength of Project Voice is the participants' ability to develop self-awareness. Many participants comment on the maturity they've gained from the program. Maturity seems to represent a willingness to share opinions, "not popping off when I disagree with someone", and "listening to Ms. Maya". While many comments reflected self-awareness, there was also a disconnect in some of the youth's perceptions of self. For example, there was a pattern in interviews where the girls would say they feel safe in their community and at home but then, at times within the same statement, would share preventative strategies they use to remain safe. Such as always watching their younger siblings when out of the house. Additionally, many identified their improved dialogue skills, yet struggled to identify what type of support they could use from the group when they were going through a difficult time.

Achievement

Achievement illuminate's life's possibilities and acknowledges movement toward explicit goals by recognizing and celebrating large and small goals and building knowledge about individual assets and aspirations. The weekly check-ins regarding progress on group projects, school work, and general accountability highlighted what progress has been achieved and what work was still needed. Many youth discussed doing homework and being more accountable to their studies because of Project Voice involvement. Yet, four of seven participants (all in 11th grade) struggled to identify what they want to do following high school in specific terms. While participants can discuss how PV has improved as a group (they get along better, no longer disagree, etc.) some struggle to name their personal strengths and goals.

CHAPTER 5 – DISCUSSION

Given the overlap between the Weikart Center's Quality Pyramid, the 5 C's of PYD, Snyder's Hope Scale and the RHF, simultaneously assessing PV for program quality and radical healing was manageable. In this section I will review learnings from PV, specifically the strengths and weakness of the case study and what can be inferred about radical healing through PV. I will then offer recommendations for youth workers and program managers interested in applying the RHF in afterschool programs.

Project Voice Case Study

PV reflects youth development literature in several ways. With a CYW program orientation, PV strives to reflect the YPQA's program quality indicators (safe environment, supportive environment, interaction, engagement). And while PV does not name the joint efforts of youth and adults as Y-AP, they are in fact partnering on joint projects over a sustained period. Over the course of this research, participants practiced mindfulness (sitting quietly) as opening activities on three occasions and completed a photovoice research project. My field research began as PV was curating their showcase, therefore I missed the development of their research question and interview process. I missed many fruitful examples of youth planning, decision making and leadership. Given the importance of agency in Snyder's Hope Scale (1991) and in the development of critical consciousness, this research suggests PYD programs prioritize the incorporation of youth planning and decision making in sustained ways.

In terms of studying the RHF, PV offered insight into a homogenous afterschool youth program. Given all participants live in MV-AG and their projects focus on the experiences of

people living in public housing, elements of “resident dissatisfaction”²⁸ (Cooper et al., 1972) were frequently in conversation. The most common complaints were MV-AG’s “stereotype” (negative social status), MV-AG being “boring because you know everyone and there’s nothing new, they don’t put anything in here for us to do” (lack of services and amenities), and while there’s disagreement over the severity of crime, every participant spoke about crime in their interviews (high crime rates or fear of crime). The participants were split over the sense of community, some describe the neighborhood as “like family” (Venkatesh, 2000) and others describe feeling ambivalent towards the community and instead “stay home” because of “bad experiences” (lack of community) (Vale, 1997, 2002).

Given the strong connection between PV and Bayside, this case study may have more evidence of healing rituals than other PYD afterschool programs. While PV is not formally connected to Bayside, all participants attend their Sunday service, five participants have gone on Bayside mission trips, and PV adult volunteers and staff regularly drive youth to and from Sunday service and have volunteered as chaperones on mission trips. Most participants reference Ms. Maya as their inspiration for going to Bayside and reconnecting with God. Therefore, PV participants tend to their spiritual selves as a group attending Bayside services.

Table 7. Survey Data –Well-being				
How often do you feel...	Before	After	Total Change	Change Only
Spiritually Healthy	2.86	4.14	1.29	1.80
1 Never 3 Sometimes 5 Always				

²⁸ Residential dissatisfaction [in public housing] is based on the following factors; institutional environment, negative social status, unsafe and/or unhealthy environment, lack of services and amenities, lack of community, high crime rates and/or fear of crime (Cooper et al., 1972).

Incorporating CARMA

Project Voice served as a strong case study, reflecting many youth programs of my past. The participants have a clear sense of belonging, pride in being PV members, and identify ways they have grown through their participation. Yet, there are opportunities for PV to become a stronger afterschool program. PV had evidence of all CARMA components, but most strongly demonstrated Culture, Agency and Relationships. Ms. Maya was explicit about her intentions to reflect Black images, stories, and culture in PV but missed opportunities to explore systemic oppression, particularly the impact of the prison industrial complex (Davis, 2003) on Black and brown communities. As well as the ways in which The Mill will impact MV-AG and why “the guy” can afford to build acres of market rate housing but MV-AG did not receive CNI funding. While PV can expand the representation of racial/ethnic experiences, the program reveals a homogenous group may simplify incorporating culture into programming. Additionally, promoting agency on personal issues may be more feasible than external issues given program evaluations assess individual improvement and many programs are not structured to support practicing external agency.

At Project Voice there was vast evidence of strong, meaningful, layered relationships between youth and adults. The varied ways youth and adults spend time together in and outside of the program space was regularly referenced in conversation. For example, there were multiple field trips in Sacramento and San Francisco to conduct research. There was ongoing interactions between youth and adults through Bayside. Also, the participants went to a program volunteer or staff’s home and cooked dinner together about once a month. Time spent together outside of program is not an option for many afterschool programs, however, the variety of roles adults express may be replicated in other programs. These experiences take participants out of their

ascribed social spaces (home/community and school) and provide access to different experiences in Sacramento; home ownership, childless adults, flexibility through convenient transportation. While relationships were an asset of PV, as a program, there are opportunities to orient volunteers to their role in the program as well as to the participants. Because the current volunteers do not share the same lived experiences it is vital they explore their own implicit biases (Banaji & Greenwald, 2013) and engage in critical reflection throughout their participation.

Fostering an intentional healing space requires a skillful, self-aware, reflexive facilitator. A significant learning is the role of facilitators and youth workers in developing young people's critical consciousness is not passive, it is active. Courageous conversations of self, personal experience, fears and beliefs model the work of developing a critical consciousness and create the space for young people to engage. Something like Ms. Maya's concern over the participants' future after high school can be situated historically discussing school segregation, and contemporarily discussing the achievement gap and wealth disparities along racial lines (Oliver & Shapiro, 2006). Sharing concern is needed, but building context for the concern, naming the patterns and consequences of practice, are critical in fostering young people's understanding of and language for their lived experiences.

Two CARMA components that Project Voice struggled to incorporate in ongoing ways were Meaning and Achievement. Two participants had a clearly explored and identified purpose but most did not. Often participants would talk about "making it big" and wanting to help their community, the vague language was difficult to interpret²⁹. When talking to Maya about meaning, she explained "whenever social issues are introduced for discussion participants don't

²⁹ In addition to language around future goals, participants have limited vocabulary around topics of harm and healing.

want to discuss them because they make them sad or because they feel there is nothing that can be done to change the system”. In terms of achievement, Maya clarified that multiple methods of goal exploration occurred at the beginning of the photovoice project. Maya shared that the group best sets goals through journal writing. While Meaning and Achievement can be incorporated in a variety of ways, Maya’s comments reinforce that the strategies of exploring one’s strengths, goals and role in advancing justice will likely change group to group, based on preference.

Throughout the interviews and during the programing, there was limited discussion of the photovoice projects in terms of what the participants did and what skills they developed through the projects. Ms. Maya attempted on several occasions (mainly in preparation for the showcase speeches) to get participants to name things like developing a research question and interview protocol and interviewing community members about their experiences living in public housing. Instead participants mainly discussed their first showcase at the Crock Art Museum; large crowds, feeling nervous before speaking, and the press they received.

Recommendations for Integrating CARMA in Afterschool Programming

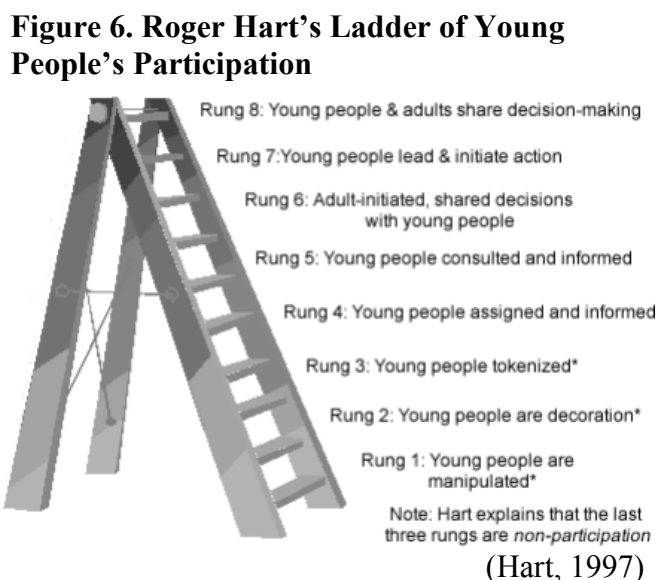
Culture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm and celebrate cultural and indigenous practices. • Integrate cultural practices into school and organizational rituals.
(Ginwright, 2016, p. 26)

In afterschool programs, there are many ways to integrate and affirm culture. As witnessed in PV, programmatic opportunities include group check-ins, ice breakers, reflection activities, and program materials, but could also include field trips, special program days or series, and guest speakers. Additionally, incorporating culture into afterschool programs provides

opportunities for youth to lead, teach or facilitate activities, conversations, practices, or rituals that reflect their cultural practices, particularly when youth workers do not share the same cultural practices as participants. Programs interested in incorporating the RHF can start by reviewing current program materials, decor, and activities and identify which cultures are currently recognized and celebrated in your program. Determine if they reflect program participants. Also identify if any cultures are degraded, mocked, or delegitimized and determine how to restore value and appreciation.

Agency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create space for youth voice. • Encourage political reflection of root causes of social issues. • Identify ways for young people to address community issues.
(Ginwright, 2016, p. 26)

Agency, in terms of youth voice, is a foundational element of many Positive Youth Development inspired afterschool programs (Hamilton, Hamilton, & Pittman, 2004). Practicing youth voice within afterschool programs provides practice for young people to suggest and defend ideas and have the confidence to advocate for their perspectives and interests (Hart, 1997). However, creating meaningful, influential opportunities for youth voice takes more work on part of program coordinators. Youth voice requires more planning, program time, support, patience, transparency and less adult control. When PV was planning



future programming there was no clear vision or program goals to guide the conversation. Being forthcoming and transparent about variables and constraints is key in successful youth decision making.

For example, if planning future programming, start by reviewing the goals and purpose of the program. As youth share ideas use the goals and purpose as a touchpoint to determine in real time if suggestions align with program needs. For programs like PV, that want youth to plan and facilitate meetings, create a process to support the youth through planning and facilitation. For example, PV was discussing programming ideas that would start in two months and span 12-16 weeks. While ideas were thought of as a group, there was no conversation (that I witnessed) following the group bonding and Next Steps determination to engage youth in further planning. It's critical that youth workers determine when planning decisions need to be made, what support youth may need at what points in the process, and what role adults (staff and volunteers) will have supporting youth from planning through facilitation.

Relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create opportunities to learn about others beyond their titles.• Use activities that encourage young people and adults to share their story.• Create healing circles where members share their interests, fears, and hopes.
(Ginwright, 2016, p. 26)

Given organizational expectations of professionalism, power structures, and managing a group of young people, creating an afterschool program culture where adults participate can be challenging. Balancing program flow, youth voice and youth-adult partnership is demanding, particularly when programs are understaffed. Ms. Maya has been successful in recruiting long-term, highly committed volunteers, yet the volunteers do not understand their role within the

program beyond “I come to take part”. In terms of structuring afterschool programs to encourage opportunities for dialogue, consider the ways adults participant, the space itself is organized and the program is structured. Does it encourage or discourage dialogue? Just as youth should have a variety of opportunities to work in different group settings throughout the program day, youth workers should have a variety of opportunities to connect with young people; one-on-one, small group, and in the large group.

Meaning
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have conversations about what gives life meaning.• Create discussions that foster self-discovery.
(Ginwright, 2016, p. 26)

A key component of understanding one’s purpose and role in promoting justice is having an understanding of self, an awareness of social issues, and an understanding patters of inequity (Ginwright, 2016). Youth workers have an opportunity to teach the context in which young people live; what informs their opportunities, challenges, schools and communities. These are courageous, skillful conversations. Often schools and afterschool programs promote critical thinking but critical thinking cannot displace critical consciousness. Critical consciousness is developed intentionally, overtime, with youth workers that understand systematic oppression, organizing, and social movement history. A note of caution, poor relations between youth and adults (staff or volunteers) can reinforce trauma. Given class and racial differences between participants and adults in PV, and many afterschool programs, the adults’ awareness of implicit bias, critical reflection and familiarity of social injustices cannot be overlooked as a key factor in developing meaning.

Achievement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize and celebrate small and large victories. • Build knowledge and skills about individual assets and aspirations. 	
(Ginwright, 2016, p. 26)	

To incorporate Achievement into afterschool programs, young people need to set and revisit strengths, challenges and goals (Ginwright, 2016). As stated earlier Ms. Maya found independent writing activities were most successful in PV. As youth workers, create ways to set goals, reflect on them, and acknowledge progress. Consider using journals, vision boards, timelines, and calendars. Additionally, what rituals can be incorporated to support goal setting and celebrate improvement. Consider how progress can be tracked, particularly for long-term goals. Finally, avoid pushing goals on youth. However, when specific goals are encouraged, such as academic achievement or post-secondary admissions, explore ways of affirming young people's strength by recognizing and celebrating small victories and helping them identify their assets.

Conclusions

Afterschool programs are a dynamic space to address the harm, hurt, and injures young people carry. This thesis project studied the afterschool teen leadership group Project Voice, to explore the alignment between the RHF and PYD afterschool programming. This research concludes PYD and the RHF overlap through multiple strategies of engagement such as building agency, meaningful youth and adult relationships, fostering community and identifying goals and aspirations. Young people have psycho-spiritual injuries and afterschool programs foster radical healing through intentional exploration of culture, meaningful social action and ongoing reflection and dialogue.

While PYD programs theoretically align with the RHF, to achieve radical healing deliberate action is needed to ensure programmatic vision and practices reflect healing goals and strategies. This may mean reimagining programmatic outcomes such as critical consciousness instead of critical thinking, collective growth instead of individual participant growth and curiosity instead of academic achievement. Furthermore, this research suggests a need to explore the role of the youth worker (staff and volunteers) as a conduit for radical healing and modeler of critical consciousness and community forming.

Further systems-level research is needed to understand how to recognize and further implement radical healing practices in afterschool programs. In particular, the following questions deserve attention:

- What knowledge and skillsets are needed for youth workers to implement the RHF in afterschool programs, with attention to both youth workers that do and do not reflect the socioeconomic, racial, gender, sexual identities of the participants?
- How is radical healing present or absent in youth worker ethos of practice?
- How do programs incorporate healing into their mission, vision, and program structure?
- How do programs hire and support youth workers integrating the RHF?
- Do funders value healing outcomes? Why or why not?
- How do programs capture and evaluate healing and wellness promoting activities?

In conclusion, afterschool programs reflecting Positive Youth Development as a philosophy of practice can foster radical healing in participants, particularly when program activities and experiences explore culture, expand critical consciousness, promote agency, set goals and make meaning through supportive, dynamic, intimate peer and adult relationships.

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APPENDIX A – PROJECT VOICE PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Program Description	An after-school youth development program that empowers young women to be leaders in their community. Project Voice uses project based learning techniques to teach young people how to be researchers and social advocates in their community.
Intended Outcomes	Students will report that they feel supported.
	Increased youth voice and self-confidence.
	Increased skills and capacities.
	Students will report a reduction of stress.
	Students will report that they feel safe.
	Provide opportunities for productive decision-making and constructive engagement in their family, community, school and other social institutions.
Language provided by the Project Voice Program Coordinator	

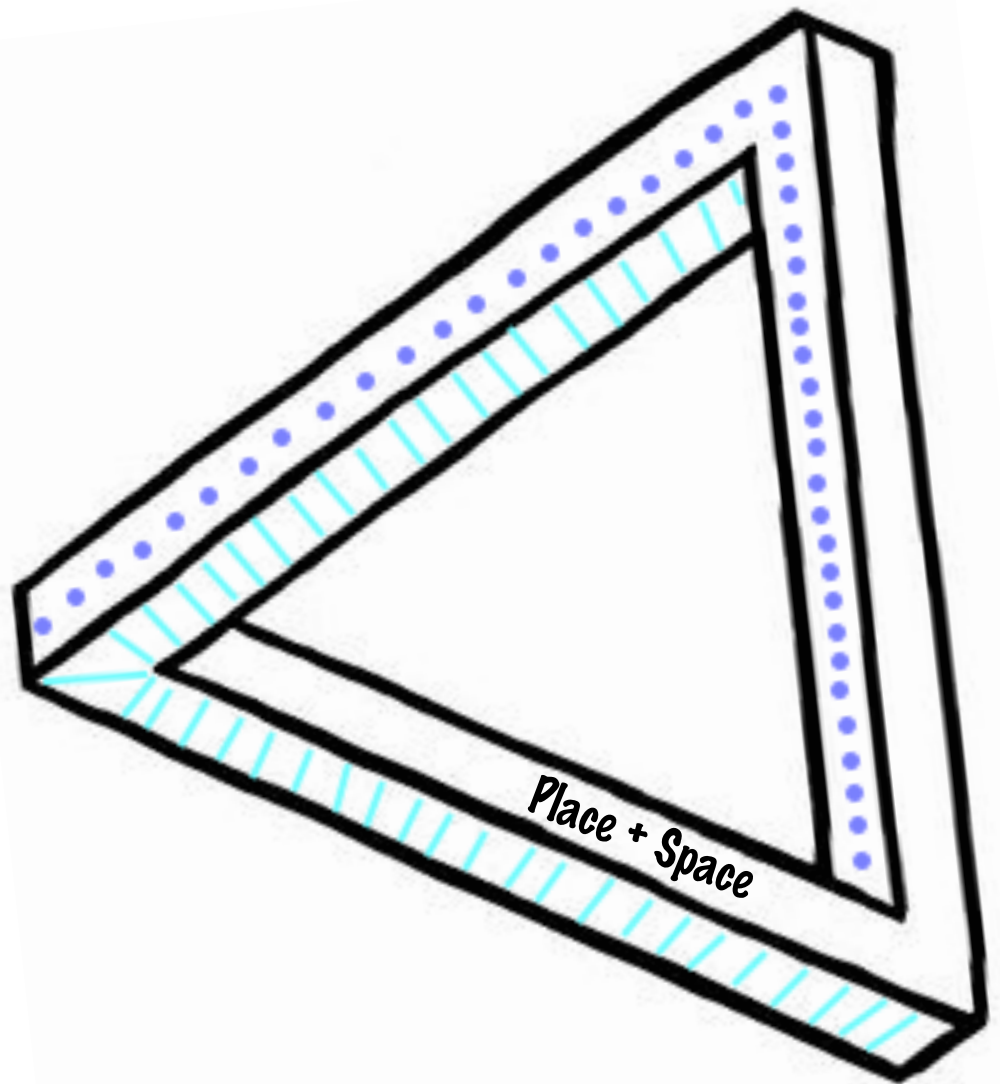
APPENDIX B – REFLECTION TOOLS

Research Topic
Place vs Space

Directions: Write or draw people, activities, and things that make up your place (neighborhood) versus your space. Include commonalities between your place and space in the triangle.

Place
Marina Vista – Alder Grove

Space
Project Voice



Research Topic
Peer Interactions

Directions: Choose a head and inside the head write or draw words, phrases and images about your interactions with peers at Project Voice.



My interactions
with others at
Project Voice are...



My interactions
with others at
Project Voice are...

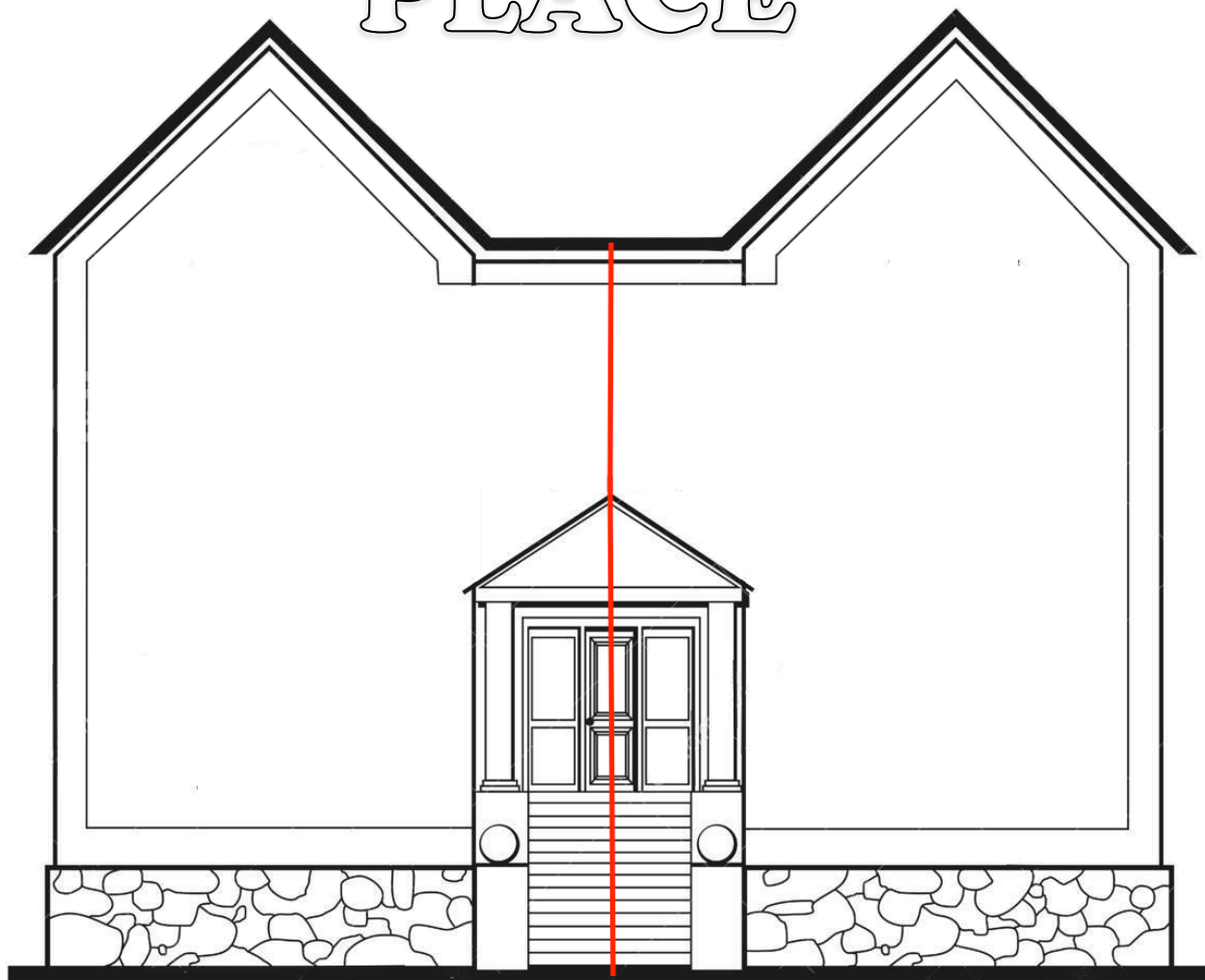


My interactions
with others at
Project Voice are...

Research Topic
Safety

Directions: Write or draw in the building and on the lines below
what makes you feel safe and unsafe in the community.

PLACE



unsafe

safe

SHARE A TIME WHEN YOU...

**...participated in a discussion,
making a group decision or
planning a project**

...mentored another person

...lead a group activity

... presented to a group

**...shared your ideas, feelings or feedback
about the group**

Research Topic
Health/Healing

Directions: Between the lines below write things, activities, rituals, and/or people that make you feel good, healthy and well.



What makes me feel good? ...healthy? ...well?

APPENDIX C – SURVEY

Name: _____	Age: _____
School: _____	Grade: _____
Racial/Ethnic identity: _____	

1. How long have you been participating in Project Voice? (please circle)

Less than 6 months 6 months – 1 year 1 year – 2 years More than 2 years

2. One average, how often to you attend Project Voice activities? (please circle)

1-2 days a month once a week twice a week more than twice a week

3. How many years have you lived in the Seavey Circle/New Helvetica/Marina Vista – Alder Grove community?

4. Did you attend Leataata Floyd Elementary? (please check)

☐ **yes** ☐ **no** If yes, for what grades? _____

Indicate your answers by writing **Y** for yes, **N** for no, or **S** for sometimes in each box.

Questions	SC/NH/MV-AG ("the community")	High School	Project Voice
Do you feel physically safe?			
Do you feel emotionally safe?			
Do you feel supported and encouraged by at least one adult to try new things and develop new skills?			
Are you proud to be thought of as a member, student or participant of...	member	student	participant
Do you feel respected by the peers you interact with in these places?			
Are you (or have you been) a part of a group project that you helped plan ? (Y/N)			
Are you (or have you been) a part of a group project that you helped complete ? (Y/N)			

Please estimate your responses to the following questions by using the scale of 1-5, with 1 being never and 5 being always. Please circle your answer.

NOTE: You are asked to consider your perspective before and after joining Project Voice (PV).

Before joining PV Never - Sometimes - Always					How often did/do you feel...	Since joining PV Never - Sometimes - Always				
1	2	3	4	5	...playful	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	...deeply connected to others	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	...confident	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	...trusting of others	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	...physically healthy	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	...mentally healthy	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	...spiritually healthy	1	2	3	4	5
To what degree did/do you feel able to...										
1	2	3	4	5	...make your community healthier or stronger	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	...make change for your community	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	...be a leader in your community	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	...stand up against those in power (on behalf of your community)	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	...change the way people (outsiders) view your community	1	2	3	4	5

What skills have you learned through your involvement in Project Voice?

APPENDIX D – INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

I. Background information on your neighborhood

- 1** What neighborhood do you live in and how long have you lived here?
- 2** What do you like about your community?
- 3** Are there challenges that affect residents living in your community? If yes, can you describe some of the challenges?
- 4 Are there challenges that have affected you or your family in your community?
- 5** What is it like growing up in your community? What have you learned living in your community that you may not learn living in other communities?
- 6 What makes you feel safe in your community? What makes you feel unsafe?
- 7 What ways do you feel supported by adults in your community? How could adults better support you, or young people, in your community?
- 8** What hopes do you have for your community?

II. Participation in Project Voice

- 9 What has your experience participating in Project Voice been like? What stands out to you about the activities, people, or places?
- 10 What impact has participating in Project Voice had on you?
- 11 How are your relationships with adults in Project Voice similar or different from your relationships with adults in the community and at school?
- 12 How are your relationships with peers in Project Voice similar or different from your relationships with peers in the community and at school?
- 13 Have your experiences in your community or feelings about your community changed since participating in Project Voice? If so, how?
- 14 What if Project Voice was located outside of your neighborhood but was still focused on empowerment and documenting your community through photovoice? How would it be different? Would you still participate? Why or why not?

III. Radical Healing + Hope

- 15 How would you have described yourself before Project Voice? How would you describe yourself now? What has changed in terms of how you think of yourself?
- 16 Before doing Project Voice what was your outlook on life or the world like? Has it changed? How?
- 17 Before Project Voice what did you imagine for your life in and after high school? What do you imagine now?
- 18 Have you noticed any changes in your physical well-being since participating in Project Voice?
- 19 Have you noticed any changes in your mental or emotional well-being since participating in Project Voice?
- 20 Have you noticed any changes in your spiritual well-being since participating in Project Voice? How has Project Voice influenced your religious or spiritual practice?
- 21 Do you go to church? And if so, how long have you been going? What do you like about going to church? Has going to church impacted your sense of hope or purpose?
- 22** What hopes do you have for yourself? What do you want to achieve?
- 23 Has Project Voice impacted the hopes you have for yourself? If so, how? Did you have hopes before Project Voice? Have your hopes changed since participating in Project Voice?
- 24 If you never joined Project Voice, how would your life be different?

*Highlighted questions reflect PV's 10 question photovoice interview protocol.